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# MONEY, LABOUR AND LAND

Approaches to the economies  
of ancient Greece

*Edited by Paul Cartledge,  
Edward E. Cohen and Lin Foxhall*



London and New York

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at Darwin College, Cambridge



Trade in the classical Greek world (adapted from *Atlas of Classical History*, ed. Richard J.A. Talbert, Routledge: 1985).







# CONTENTS

<i>List of figures and tables</i>	xi
<i>List of contributors</i>	xiii
<i>Preface by Geoffrey Lloyd</i>	xv
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
EDWARD E. COHEN	
<b>2 Hard surfaces</b>	<b>8</b>
IAN MORRIS	
<b>3 Small change and the moneyed economy</b>	<b>44</b>
H.S. KIM	
<b>4 Demos' <i>phialê</i> and the rhetoric of money in fourth-century Athens</b>	<b>52</b>
SITTA VON REDEN	
<b>5 Workshop, marketplace and household: the nature of technical specialization in classical Athens and its influence on economy and society</b>	<b>67</b>
EDWARD M. HARRIS	
<b>6 An unprofitable masculinity</b>	<b>100</b>
EDWARD E. COHEN	
<b>7 Markets, fairs and monetary loans: cultural history and economic history in Roman Italy and Hellenistic Greece</b>	<b>113</b>
JEAN ANDREAU	

# CONTENTS

8	<b>Merchants, prostitutes and the ‘new poor’: forms of contract and social status</b>	130
	JULIE VÉLISSAROPOULOS-KARAKOSTAS	
9	<b>Domination and exploitation</b>	140
	DIMITRIS J. KYRTATAS	
10	<b>The political economy of Greek slavery</b>	156
	PAUL CARTLEDGE	
11	<b>On Paul Cartledge, ‘The political economy of Greek slavery’</b>	167
	MICHAEL H. JAMESON	
12	<b>The hireling and the slave: a transatlantic perspective</b>	175
	WALTER SCHEIDEL	
13	<b>A simple case of exploitation? The helots of Messenia</b>	185
	SUSAN E. ALCOCK	
14	<b>The strategies of Mr Theopompos</b>	200
	JOHN K. DAVIES	
15	<b>Access to resources in classical Greece: the egalitarianism of the polis in practice</b>	209
	LIN FOXHALL	
	<i>Bibliography</i>	221
	<i>Index of ancient authors</i>	255
	<i>General index</i>	262

# FIGURES AND TABLES

## Figures

2.1	Approaches to gain	10
2.2	The law of supply and demand	21
2.3	The supply of free, <i>hektemoroi</i> and slave labour in archaic Attica	34
13.1	Southwestern Messenia, with principal places mentioned in the text	191
13.2	Study zone of the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project	192
13.3	Percentage of definitely dated sherds, by period, found in each PRAP area	194
14.1	The family tree of the 'Bouselidai'	201

## Tables

2.1	Economic sociology and mainstream economics	26
13.1	Tract sherd counts for Archaic-Hellenistic periods, Pylos Regional Archaeological Project	193
13.2	Distribution of sites, by period, identified in each PRAP area	195



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# PREFACE

*Geoffrey Lloyd*

When the term ‘economics’ was eventually coined – in the early twentieth century – was that an invention or a discovery? In one sense it was clearly an invention, in that a new learned discipline came into being, to take its place among other university departments, staffed with its professors and lecturers in designated areas of the subject. But what about the phenomena that were studied by that discipline? Were they called into being or had they been there all along?

Let me elaborate those two alternatives with some analogies. On the option that the phenomena were invented, the analogy would be with, say, the jet engine. That certainly did not exist in any sense before it was invented. Similarly some historians of science (such as Latour) have argued that microbes did not exist before Pasteur, and they have pointed to the feedback or loop effect of the creation of a concept such as that of child abuse. Once that concept was made explicit, so Hacking has argued, it called into being the very phenomena that it was used to describe.

On the other option, that of discovery, the analogy would be that of Columbus discovering America. The lands that now go by that name were certainly there before Columbus arrived and mistook them for countries bordering on China. However for the indigenous peoples of America whom Columbus discovered, what *they* discovered – or had thrust to their attention – was the realisation that there were foreigners eager to convert them to Christianity and to appropriate their land.

Every social anthropologist is taught to be careful to distinguish between actors’ and observers’ categories, the former the concepts that the peoples they study use to describe their experience, the latter those brought into play by the anthropologists themselves. Where economics is concerned, neither the Greeks nor the Romans had a word for it. Rather, the Greeks had a word, οἰκονομία – from which our own term is derived of course – but that meant something very different, the orderly management of the household or estate (see Cartledge, Chapter 10).

Ancient authors obviously paid far less attention than modern ones to such topics as exchange value, price inflation, supply and demand, banking and credit, coinage, work, and they arguably pay none at all to such phenomena as

labour, in our sense of the term. Moreover their methods of dealing with the issues that they do discuss differ from those of modern studies. One of the most striking differences is the absence of any sustained quantitative analyses, let alone the demand for statistically significant results. But whole areas of what we would call economic phenomena receive no explicit attention, or if they are attended to, are not treated as matters of purely economic concern. Ancient thinking on slavery focuses on the political, social and moral distinctions between slave and free, rather than on the appropriation of surplus value (Cartledge, Chapter 10 and Jameson, Chapter 11). Loans, as Andreau points out in Chapter 7, are not just a matter of a financial transaction, in that the terms agreed may well reflect the desire to cement or create social relations. Prestige and honour may be the leading motives more than a concern for financial gain.

So the question of the framework within which we can or should discuss the ancient economy or economies is much contested. On the one hand, there are those who insist on the realities of the economic phenomena – hard though they are for modern scholars to reconstruct. Even though ancient interests do not tally with those of modern economics, ancient economic life is nevertheless a legitimate area of study.

On the other, there are those who resist any such move on the grounds that it implies the inappropriate application of observers' categories that are bound to distort the lived experiences as the ancient actors themselves saw them – hard though that too is for us to reconstruct with any confidence. Against the realists, the representationalists insist on the priority of those actors' categories.

To these conceptual disputes we must add formidable difficulties associated with the quality and the quantity of the data available – either for the study of ancient representations or for that of the economic realities that on the realist view are a proper subject of analysis. Quantitative analysis was not in the ancients' field of vision, as I have already noted, and in most cases it is beyond our reach too. We do not even have firm data for ancient populations, let alone for the gross national products of communities of different sizes. Worse still, most of our literary texts reflect the assumptions and prejudices of elites of one type or another – their interests both in the sense of what they were curious about and in the sense of the values they chose to defend or indeed considered unquestionable. If we are concerned with representations, we have access only to a tiny subset of the concepts entertained and the attitudes adopted. If we hope to get to economic hard facts behind the representations, we are still desperately impoverished for data to throw light on questions relating to the vast mass of the population in every state at every period of antiquity. Wherever we turn, the evidence is lacunose and loaded with bias.

On the basis of these observations the outlook for anyone with the ambition to study what passes as ancient economic life may seem irremediably bleak. The way ahead must depend on two types of development – and the positive results contained in the chapters of this book provide eloquent testimony to that possibility of progress.

First in the matter of evidence. New data have been coming to light, and new models and methods of analysis can be and have been brought to bear. Thus in Chapter 3 Kim focuses on the importance of the existence of coins in small denominations – neglected or totally ignored in many previous studies. Before the analysis of the new hoards, indeed their discovery, it was commonly assumed that early silver and gold coinage existed only in large denominations that were quite impracticable for ordinary commercial transactions. Now we can see how mistaken that was. The transformation in our understanding of the early history of coinage, its uses and its impact, has only just begun.

Then Alcock's report in Chapter 13 on the study of settlement patterns in Messenia – and Foxhall's use of similar evidence in her study of resources in Chapter 15 – provide further instances of an expansion in our data base. Thanks to new fieldwork, we can get beyond the literary texts and are now in a better position to arrive at judgements as to where, and consequently also concerning how, the helots lived.

Scheidel's study of slavery in the American South (Chapter 12) exemplifies the usefulness of a comparative approach, at least when both sides of the comparison are subject to critical and sceptical evaluation. To be sure, the question of what constraints need to be imposed on the transfer of conclusions from better known modern studies to the Graeco-Roman situation is yet another hotly debated topic. Yet abstract model-building drawing on comparative materials can be a potent tool of analysis helping in particular to determine the outer limits within which the ancient experience can be assumed to fall.

Finally Harris' study in Chapter 6 of the semantics of the professions is a telling reminder that the most familiar type of evidence of all, namely our extant literary texts, has still to yield up all its potentially relevant information.

So the first hope for the future lies in new evidence and methods of analysis. But that still leaves the fundamental question with which I began. Are the two attitudes to ancient economies that we can call the representational and the realist irreconcilable? The principals in the debate have often written as if they were. Yet one reflection that may be prompted by the diversity of materials in this book is this. What we encompass under the rubric of economic phenomena is far more disparate than some who demand a crisp answer to the question of the validity of different modes of investigation seem to allow. At one end of the spectrum, the irrelevance of much of the economics of industrialization to the ancient world is agreed on all sides. At the other, we can study ancient attitudes to pay and rewards for goods and services and go some way to reconstruct not just ancient concepts but the social practices they were embedded in. There is much that falls in between, where debate is bound to continue.

Yet that ongoing controversy can itself be taken as a point of departure for future progress in understanding, provided at least that the pluralism of economic phenomena is granted, and provided that the competition between the representationalists and realists is not construed as itself a zero-sum game. Some expectations of the possibility of economic analysis based on our,

observers', categories, are easily defeated. But in other cases the ancient categories themselves are more promising. There may be room after all both for the intense study of the actors' perspectives and for the judicious application of observers' concepts.

The conference that these studies emerged from was originally entitled *kerdos* ('gain, profit'). The organisers thereby moved directly to the ancient category itself. This was to be a workshop not on profit, but on the spectrum of approaches to gain, a concept both within the mental horizon of ancient authors and part of their lived experience. The aim was not to diagnose the shortfall in the ancients' reflections (though that is a conclusion that some of the authors come to). Rather the target for our discussions was both those ancients' representations and what they were representations of – what was there to be represented.

Paul Cartledge was the prime mover, inviting a group of scholars from many different countries representing many different approaches to discuss the aspects of the problems that they felt best able to illuminate. The book that results is not the record of the conference's proceedings. All the chapters that originate in papers given at the workshop have been revised, and several have been completely rewritten (Cartledge, Jameson, von Reden, Cohen). The divergence in viewpoint will be obvious to any reader, though I would like to remark that the appearance of disagreement is greater in the written, than it was in the spoken, communications.

It was appropriate that the workshop was held at Darwin College, Cambridge, where Moses Finley had been Master from 1976 to 1982. By that I do not mean that Darwin should be seen as devoted to the perpetuation of Finley's or anyone else's approach. If his *Ancient Economy* (Finley 1999a) contributed hugely to opening up debate (however much its theses have been misunderstood), Finley himself never imagined that it closed it. It was in the spirit of continuation that we conducted our discussions, and I believe that the outcome will, in due time, be seen to mark a new beginning.

## INTRODUCTION

*Edward E. Cohen*

Discussion of ancient economic history is often accompanied by admonitions seemingly more appropriate to the packaging of tobacco products: 'Ancient economics has become a treacherous field' (Schaps 1998b: 1) that 'can sometimes leave you with a sleepless night' (Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 121), or with 'the virtual impossibility of drawing up a reasoned and equilibrated balance-sheet' (Andreau et al. 1994:10).<sup>1</sup> 'Danger . . . familiarity with the debate leads to boredom' (Whittaker 1995: 22). For active participants in the debate over the nature of 'the ancient economy,' however, the threat seems far more toxic than mere ennui: 'some recent works express amazement that the other side has not yet fallen down dead' (Schaps 1998b: 1), and others gape at 'modernism's miraculous powers of recuperation from repeated and apparently fatal blows' (Meikle 1995b: 148). As with 'passive smoking,' the victims include even scholars who consciously seek to avoid involvement.<sup>2</sup>

This academic scourge has a long history. Even today, comparative histories of financial systems tend to treat Graeco/Roman economies exclusively from a 'modern' or 'primitivist' perspective (cf. Goldsmith 1987: 16, 254, n.1; Lowry 1987: 2–10; Love 1991: 211–45). But polarized analysis of the ancient economy was already into its second century when Bücher published in 1893 his seminal 'primitivist' exposition of the ancient economy ('geschlossene Hauswirtschaft'), to which Meyer in 1895 and Beloch in 1902 issued 'modernizing' responses.<sup>3</sup> Decades of dichotomized struggle followed in which – lamented one late twentieth-century observer – 'no new weapon is lethal, and none of the battles is finally decisive' (Hopkins 1983: ix). Still the virtually simultaneous appearance in the early 1990s of voluminous but seemingly contradictory interpretations of Athenian credit ('lending and borrowing')<sup>4</sup> impelled a Greek-born authority on modern finance, Anthony Courakis of Oxford University, to convene an 'International Conference' on 'Economic Thought and Economic Reality in Ancient Greece' which was held at the European Cultural Centre in Delphi in late September 1994. There, for four days, under the sponsorship of British and Greek foundations, and with the cooperation of the Greek government, scholars of ancient Greek history and philosophy, and of modern economics and finance, from Europe, North America and Africa (and an

audience of economists and ancient historians from various parts of Greece) presented and heard papers, and enjoyed fine food, pleasant accommodation and stimulating discussion. But this was, after all, a conference on aspects of the ancient economy – and occasional emotional confrontations and verbal jousting were only preliminary to a demand by one group of participants to exercise a veto over the publication of papers deemed by them or their representative not to be of appropriate quality. In the event, the proceedings of the conference were never published, and the convenor abandoned efforts to hold future similar meetings. ‘The ancient economy is an academic battleground’ (Hopkins 1983: ix).

But the editors of the present volume (participants in the Delphi conference) were convinced that the deleterious effects of Greek economic discourse were outweighed by its therapeutic benefits, and that a proliferating variety of sophisticated methodologies and a broadening of academic interests and approaches were working to ameliorate the polarized paralysis of past struggles over the ancient economy. A profusion of studies was now emanating from ‘Marxists,’ ‘structuralists,’ ‘substantivists’ and ‘formalists,’ from practitioners of cultural poetics (who tend to interpret economic phenomena as agent-centred categories of representation, rather than as narrowly functional occurrences)<sup>5</sup> and from traditional archaeologists, papyrologists, numismatists, epigraphers, legal scholars, agricultural historians and many others who have been busily building models, researching specialized topics, undertaking surveys and studying material remains,<sup>6</sup> largely oblivious of the ‘endless battles about “the ancient economy”’ that – as the millennium was coming to its end – seemed ‘to have run their course’ (Cartledge 1998; cf. Davies 1998: 230; Kuhrt 1998: 29). We therefore felt it auspicious to convene a gathering intended to foster dialogue (or at least mutual awareness) among scholars using a multitude of modalities and approaches to Greek economic subjects. And so towards the end of May 1997 about 30 participants from Europe and North America gathered at Darwin College at Cambridge University for three days of presentation and discussion.

Similar considerations had led French scholars in 1994 to institute a series of conferences on ‘the ancient economy’, which have been held periodically at Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges in the French Pyrenees. The organizers of these meetings (Messrs. J. Andreau, P. Briant and R. Descat) had noted that in reality the primitive/modern debate had never (‘heureusement’) monopolized the efforts of scholars and that numerous studies had been devoted, with increasing frequency in recent decades, to other aspects of the material situation of the inhabitants of the ancient world. Concluding that, for such conferences, a primitive/modern focus was purposeless,<sup>7</sup> the convenors determined to encourage quantitative approaches and to focus at each gathering on a selected topic (an overall theme or a single delineated issue) to be considered in the perspective of the entire period of antiquity and over the totality of the area around (‘or in contact with’) the ancient Mediterranean.<sup>8</sup> And to protect against

the excessive parochiality of *Altertumswissenschaft*, at each conference a final response is offered by an individual not otherwise involved in ancient studies: for example, an anthropologist who has focused on the pre-colonial history of West Africa and has written on an aspect of modern European history relevant to the year's theme (Emmanuel Terray in 1999), an economic historian specializing in the modern period (Jean-Yves Grenier in 1997).<sup>9</sup>

Our approach has been quite different. We have determined to focus on the ancient Greek world (including its Hellenistic and Roman manifestations), to avoid valorizing any individual approach or tendency (such as quantitative analysis), and to avoid a single topic or theme (hence the chameleonic rubric of the conference: *Kerdos: the economics of gain in the ancient Greek world*). But our narrow commitment to the 'ancient' and to the 'Greek' goes beyond nomenclature and reflects a fundamental orientation.

### The ancient Greek world

Influential scholars have often insisted on the unity of the 'ancient world,' and hence of the 'ancient economy,' both as a theoretical construct and as a spiritual fusion.<sup>10</sup> In practice, however, 'the ancient world' is traditionally equated with 'classical' antiquity, i.e., Greek and Roman life and sources.<sup>11</sup> This is, of course, a patently false identification (Cartledge, Chapter 10), and even classicists have come to expand their horizons to encompass those neighbouring civilizations of the 'Near East' that interacted with and (at the least) strongly influenced Greek and Roman life.<sup>12</sup> Yet an expansive inclusiveness seemed to us to mandate a choice between the Scylla of superficiality and the Charybdis of hermeneutical incoherence. Academic interaction is necessarily inhibited by the vast scope, both geographic and temporal, of territories 'in contact with' the Mediterranean, and by the resultant complementary ignorance of scholars who are often exclusively immersed in the study of a single aspect of an individual academic field.

Moreover – although Near Eastern documents of the first millennium BCE are often dated and preserved in serial order, with a profusion of figures and administrative content, thus offering some clear advantages over comparable Greek and Roman materials – Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian studies are afflicted by a frequent absence of narrative context, a lacuna exacerbated by the relatively limited academic resources that have been devoted to elucidation of even long-known documents. Yet this material generally presents even greater uncertainties of interpretation (and is often yet more fragmentary) than evidence from classical sources.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, a specialist in the 'ancient Near East' decried as an 'almost impossible task' a request to add 'some consideration of commercial practices in the ancient Near East' to a recent symposium oriented to Graeco-Roman trade in antiquity (Kuhrt 1998: 6).

Less dramatic cleavages mandate care in the conflation of evidence from different eras or aspects of the classical world, and even in the intermixture of Greek and Roman materials. For the Roman Empire, for example, financial



practices in the Latin-speaking provinces were quite distinct from those prevalent within the Eastern territories (and even among the Greek-speaking provinces there was frequently a lack of uniformity).<sup>14</sup> Because of such discontinuities, we have admitted Roman considerations only gingerly, and then only in contexts intertwined with the 'ancient Greek world'. Thus Andreau's chapter in this volume – although it takes its context and examples largely from Roman Italy – references Magna Graecia, pan-Hellenic sanctuaries and Greek religious festivals, and engages methodological issues that have largely arisen in Hellenic context.<sup>15</sup>

Within this commitment to the ancient Greek world, our chapters exemplify 'how wide the spectrum of approaches' to ancient economic history has become (Davies 1998: 225): archaeological (Alcock), philosophical (Kyrtatas), political economic (Foxhall), comparative (Scheidel, Cartledge), numismatic (Kim), juridical (Vélissaropoulos), social/prosopographical (Davies), constructionist (Cohen), philological (Harris), methodological (Andreau), sociological (Morris) and cultural poetic/historical (von Reden).<sup>16</sup> Yet the full diversity of contemporary scholarship can only be suggested in a volume of modest bulk. Thus we offer nothing explicitly Marxist (although several of our chapters approach 'exploitation' in terms unlikely to be congenial to devotees of market economics). But the most striking omission, perhaps, is that of cliometric studies – absent except for Foxhall's contribution which draws in part on earlier quantitative analysis (Osborne 1991a; Foxhall 1992; cf. Morris 1994a: 362) and Morris' application of mathematical models derived from modern economics to the ancient literary traditions about Solonian Athens. This lacuna, however, is largely a consequence of our focus on Hellenic studies. Although quantitative research is highly valorized in all areas of historical studies – 'nothing is intelligible until it has been put into statistics' (Braudel 1981: 23, disapprovingly) – 'the ignominious truth is that there are no ancient statistics' (Jones 1948; cf. Momigliano 1952; Andreau, Briant and Descat 1997: 5–6; Cartledge, Chapter 10). Even for the Roman Empire, an area where scale of phenomena and profusion of remains would seem to offer reasonable opportunity for quantitative analyses, relatively little numerically based work has even been attempted: the better efforts – such as those of Duncan-Jones (1974; 1982; 1990; 1994) – have invariably required an extreme ingenuity, an originality sometimes itself decried as inherently unreliable.<sup>17</sup> For Greek economic history – despite the survival of a few pockets of evidence amenable to cliometric analysis<sup>18</sup> – quantitative studies are virtually non-existent, frustrated by the notorious unreliability of numbers transmitted over thousands of years through confused and sometimes contradictory manuscripts, by the patent impossibility of assuming that material which has often survived by chance constitutes a scientifically appropriate sampling, and by the total absence for many issues of any data at all. For the classical and archaic Greek world, the most fruitful source of quantitative data is likely to be archaeological research (Morris 1994a: 363–5; cf. Alcock, Chapter 13 and Foxhall, Chapter 15).



## The modern world

Many observers have noted ‘an increasing tendency . . . to address modern political issues through the study of the Greek city’ (Foxhall, Chapter 15). The contention, for example, that Athenian sexual protocols were based not on genitalia, but on politicized dominance and submission ‘has generated great controversy, both as a historical topic of investigation and as an important issue of contemporary sexual politics’ (Larmour, Miller and Platter 1998: 28). David Halperin – who offers Greek evidence as support for sexual ‘constructionism’ in modern societies – has found in ‘the course of lecturing to different audiences around the United States’ an enormous emotional ‘resistance’ and ‘skepticism’ among the large portion of gay and lesbian society committed to sexual ‘essentialism’ (cf. Halperin 1990: 10, 44, 47; Butler 1990: 8–9, 147; Calame 1996: chapter 5; Thornton 1997: 247). In a similar fashion, the primitive/modern polarization in Greek economic history has long generated an emotional reaction not unconnected with contemporary issues. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, increasing and unprecedented technical sophistication seemed likely to challenge (and even threaten the survival of) systems of education based on the study of classical languages, literature and art (Jenkyns 1980: 60–7). Advocates of classical studies accordingly welcomed modernizing interpretations of classical economic phenomena, characterizations which then often insidiously affected scholarly interpretations of ancient economic institutions.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, critics of capitalism welcomed assertions that the vaunted excellence of classical civilization reflected an approach to economic organization inherently different from that of the modern world. An historically attested selfless communal ‘primitivism’ arguably demonstrated that socialism was not contrary to human nature, and that exploitative ‘instincts’ – unknown in ‘the ancient economy’ – were perforce a relatively recent product of capitalism (Polanyi 1922; 1932; cf. Silver 1995: 172–5). In its updated garb of ‘substantivism’ and ‘formalism’,<sup>20</sup> this primitive/modern dichotomy now separates ‘those for whom the modern science of economics is the key to understanding ancient economics and those for whom the key is anthropology’ (cf. Marchionatti 1985; Morris 1994a; 1999; Schaps 1998b: 1).

Yet ours was envisaged as a conference on the ancient Greek world, not on that world’s impact on modern life. And so in both the Cambridge conference and in this publication – but in contrast with the conferences at Delphi and Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges – we have eschewed the participation of modern economists, governmental officials, and/or experts in disciplines not requiring an intimate direct knowledge of the ancient Greek world and an ability to access that world free of the filter of language translation. In part, we were seeking to eliminate that ‘irremediable ignorance about the classical world’ (albeit, generally, by one’s opponents!) that has been frequently cited as among the principal reasons why ‘the ancient economy is an academic battleground’

(Hopkins 1983: ix). But in greater part we were seeking to centre within ancient studies the study of the ancient economy. Sceptics might assert that the result has been exposition of modern American history by British classicists (see Scheidel, Chapter 12 and Cartledge, Chapter 10). But we aimed not to avoid comparative studies, but to eliminate grand conceptualizations flawed by inadequate familiarity with the underlying evidence – whatever their superficial political attractiveness in modern contexts. For some (to paraphrase Thucydides 1.22.4), the absence of such grandiose elements may make our volume less appealing, but not, we hope, for serious students of Hellenic history.

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## NOTES

- 1 'La quasi-impossibilité de dresser un bilan raisonné et équilibré'.
- 2 For example, R. Bogaert 1995: 604: 'Nous avons tâché . . . de ne pas nous laisser influencer par ces théories . . . ce qui nous a valu d'être considéré comme un primitiviste par C. et comme un moderniste par M.'
- 3 For the eighteenth-century origins of this dispute, see Andreau, Briant and Descat 1994: 7; for the antecedents of Bücher's position, von Below 1901; Gras 1930.
- 4 Millett 1991 and Cohen 1992 in fact represented 'contrasting approaches' that shared 'some common ground' (Millett 1994: 2).
- 5 For the contribution of cultural poetics to the study of Greek history, see Dougherty and Kurke 1993a: 1–12. For its place in Greek economic history, see Morris 1999: xxix–xxxi; von Reden 1997: 154–5 (money as 'both a reality and an ideology'), 1995: 79–89; Kurke 1999: 2–6; Davidson 1997; Kim (this volume).
- 6 For a (partial) survey of these varied approaches and practitioners, see Morris 1994a. Cf. Tandy 1997: 84–87; Silver 1995: xxii–xxiii, 97–177.
- 7 The organizers rejected 'la vieille controverse modernistes–primitivistes, non parce qu'elle serait considérée par tous comme close, mais parce qu'elle a peu de chances de déboucher sur une issue scientifique satisfaisante' (Andreau, Briant and Descat 1994: 7). Similarly: Mattingly 1997; Parkins 1998: 2; Lo Cascio and Rathbone 2000; Mattingly and Salmon 2001.
- 8 Andreau, Briant and Descat 1994: 7–8, 1997: 5, 2000: 5–6. *Rencontres* have been held in 1994, 1996 and 1999, with the proceedings (largely but not entirely in French) published as *Entretiens d'archéologie et d'histoire* 1, 3, and 5 (Musée archéologique départemental de Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges) (1994, 1997, 2000). Subjects (in chronological order): 'The Role of the State in Trade in Antiquity,' 'Price and the Determination of Price in the Ancient Economies,' and 'War and the Ancient Economies'.
- 9 In the organizers' opinion, these outsider participants have demonstrated that 'le comparatisme permet de mieux comprendre les faits historiques' (Andreau, Briant and Descat 2000: 9).
- 10 E.g., Weber 1921: 756. Finley 1999a: 34 emphasizes the 'common cultural-psychological framework' of ancient Mediterranean civilization in defining an 'ancient economy'.

- 11 Finley's ancient economy, for example, excluded 'the great river-valley civilizations along the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus and Yellow rivers' (1999a: 31).
- 12 Even the meetings of the (North American) Association of Ancient Historians – generally devoted exclusively to Greek and Roman antiquity – increasingly have included presentations on Near Eastern antiquities, such as Matt Water's paper at the 2000 meeting on 'Neo-Elamite and Achaemenid Periodization'.
- 13 For exemplification and elucidation of these difficulties, see, for example, Bagg 1998; Liverani 1998; Córdoba 1997 with Fales 2000: 54, n.8.
- 14 For these reasons, Andreau (1987: 20), for example, limited his massive study of Roman financiers to those functioning in the Latinophone part of the empire (cf. Andreau 1999, which does include several references to Greece).
- 15 Similar gatherings under other auspices offer inconsistent precedent. The sessions at Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges (with the exception of the initial meeting in 1994) have been well-balanced between Graeco-Roman and Near Eastern presentations. But the periodic meetings of the Italian 'Incontri capresi di storia dell'economia antica' – despite the inclusive nomenclature – tend to be confined to Roman subjects. The theme of the Colloquio in 2000, for example, was 'Credito e moneta nel mondo romano,' and only a single paper was anticipated on a non-Roman subject.
- 16 Leslie Kurke presented a paper in the original conference based on material which was part of her then unpublished, recent book (Kurke 1999).
- 17 See Andreau, Briant and Descat 2000: 5. In many areas, the paucity of data renders even skilful analysis 'extrêmement aléatoire (ou même impossible)' (Andreau 1997: 105). Cf. Andreau 1995, 1999: 127–38. Indirection has often been critical to successful Roman quantitative studies, whether 'inductive' (e.g. Giardina 1986; Tchernia 1986) or 'deductive' (e.g. Hopkins 1980; von Freyberg 1989).
- 18 See, for example, recent considerations of Delian prices in the Hellenistic period (Reger 1994; Chankowski-Sablé 1997).
- 19 See, for example, Andreau's demonstration, this volume, of the relationship between Rostovtzeff's modernizing view of the Roman imperial economy and his relegation of Roman fairs to remote times and marginal regions.
- 20 Though the substantivist/formalist and the primitivist/modernist debates are considered different by some (Cartledge 1998 and this volume).

## HARD SURFACES

*Ian Morris*

## I Introduction

‘Κέρδος, *gain, profit, advantage: desire of gain*’. Thus Liddell and Scott. In this essay, I ask how we should study gain in ancient Greece. In the main part of the chapter (sections II–V) I set out four different ways of thinking about *kerdos*. From some of these perspectives, *kerdos* is all-important; from others, it hardly matters at all. In section VI, I focus on the significance of the pursuit of gain in a particular episode, the crisis leading to Solon’s reforms in Athens in 594 BCE. I choose this example because Greek historians interested in *kerdos* and economics more generally have regularly treated it as a decisive moment. I suggest that the ideas developed across the last twenty years by the ‘neo-institutional’ school of economic historians allow us to combine the strengths of these different approaches without having to acquiesce to their limitations. In the questions and methods that they raise, I see both a way forward from the long-running formalist-substantivist debates, and the possibility of combining cultural and economic history.

Research into gain spans the whole range of the humanities and social sciences, and is astonishingly varied. Academics are fond of spatial metaphors, and in Figure 2.1 I formalize this by representing these approaches as four overlapping sets. I begin by identifying just two broad categories of thought, which, for simplicity’s sake, I call ‘humanistic’ and ‘social-scientific’, and then subdivide each into two further sets. The basic distinction I draw between humanistic and social-scientific thought is that the former are tools for *understanding* the world, while the latter are tools for *explaining* the world. This is, of course, a sweeping generalization; but to get the analysis started, I argue that the humanities are about drawing out the meanings of the complexity of lived experience. God is in the details, and good work in the humanities explicates the richness of culture. The social sciences, on the other hand, aim to cut through the messy details that make up real life to find underlying general structures and principles. Social scientists seek to explain complexity through generalization. At the risk of caricaturing complex issues, we might say that in the humanist’s eyes, reducing the world to a handful of principles tells us little,

because it ignores precisely those things that we most need to understand. In the social scientist's eyes, humanists systematically select on dependent variables, superficially wallowing in particulars rather than seeking explanation.

I sub-divide humanistic approaches into 'liberal' and 'new'. Both focus on culture, seeking to understand meaning, but they do so in very different ways. Liberal humanism, whether historicist or formalist, generally aims at the enrichment of the individual's sensibilities. An artist's or a novelist's representations of the desire for gain, or the philology of the language of gain in a particular culture, are perfectly respectable scholarly topics. But on the whole, gain is most important because it is one of the very forces of materialism that liberal humanism tries to transcend. The new humanities, on the other hand, make the desire for gain a central analytical issue, arguing that economic motivations are culturally constructed. Showing how, in any specific case, knowledgeable actors construct and contest the category of gain in linguistic and other texts is a major goal.

I sub-divide social-scientific approaches into 'economic' and 'sociological'. The former takes the fact of *kerdos* for granted; it is hard-wired into humans. This is the starting-point for analysis, which is about how best to organize society to satisfy the desire for gain. The latter makes gain more problematic, seeing it as a fundamental human motive, but as only one of several such motives, enmeshed in a network. But both aim at generalization and explanation, using gain as the, or a, core principle to which other categories of behaviour can be reduced.

I suspect that few, if any, scholars will feel that their own work fits neatly into any of the four boxes in Figure 2.1. Reducing centuries of scholarly thought to such a simple framework is, of course, a gross oversimplification. The sets are what an economist would call stylized facts (i.e., broad generalizations, true in essence, though perhaps not in detail). My decision to start with this kind of reductionism opens me up to the charge of setting up the entire discussion in social-scientific terms. Another historian might prefer to dissolve the terrain into a mosaic of shifting discourses, each constituted by and at the same time helping to constitute the others, overlapping and forming temporary alliances, only to spring apart again. This might make some things clearer, like the ways that Marxism, feminism, phenomenology, and a host of other methods crosscut the distinctions I am drawing. Ideologically, it might make more sense to group the new humanities with (parts of) the sociological approaches, in opposition to (parts of) liberal humanism and neoclassical economics, rather than splitting these political alliances apart into humanities and social sciences. I make no claim that the way I divide the scholarly map is definitive; only that the spectrum running from generalization, abstraction, and explanation at one end and towards particularism, empiricism, and understanding at the other provides a useful wedge for opening a discussion about methods and goals. We build models to do particular jobs: mine highlights the division between the social sciences and the humanities, and I concentrate in section VI on questions and

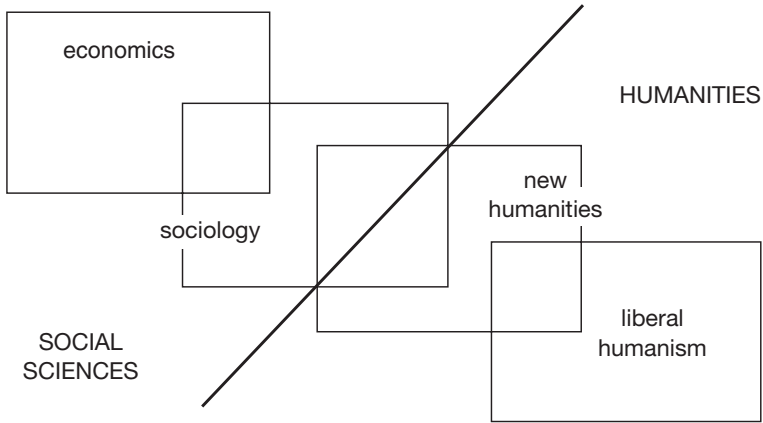


Figure 2.1 Approaches to gain.

methods that can bridge this gap. But any division of the intellectual terrain creates its own problems, and the most obvious of these is my need to keep returning to Marxism.

Deciding how we should analyse *kerdos* depends largely on what we want the study of ancient Greece to do for us, here and now. Classicists generally shy away from explicit discussion of such questions, perhaps through fears that they taint our claims to disinterested scholarship. This is naïve. Whether the field in question is physics or literary criticism, only when we know why we are doing it can we assess how well we are meeting our goals. The world has changed dramatically in the last thirty years, and neither the agendas established by nineteenth-century philologists nor those formulated by Moses Finley in the 1940s and 1950s are very helpful any more. I conclude by suggesting that thinking about *kerdos* in the terms of the New Institutional Economics not only lets us combine the most fruitful elements of the various approaches to gain, but also raises questions about ancient Greece that address widespread concerns in modern scholarship.

## II Gain and liberal humanism

By ‘liberal humanism’ I mean the mainstream of humanistic thought that took shape in nineteenth-century western Europe and North America. Its heyday was the first half of the twentieth century, but it remains important in the early

twenty-first, particularly in classical studies (see Connor 1989). Its roots reach back into Renaissance humanism, which I define as the idea that through detailed study of the classics surviving from Rome, people in the contemporary (fourteenth- through sixteenth-century) world could perfect their civilization (see Grafton and Jardine 1986). But for all the spectacular advances that the humanists achieved in philology and art, the natural sciences progressed still more rapidly in and after the seventeenth century. This made it very difficult to defend the proposition that thorough knowledge of Latin was the best way to improve the world. Humanists responded by arguing that their methods could bring about an inner transformation of the learned person (see Grafton 1991). German humanists, who by the eighteenth century were the most professionalized and technically advanced in Europe, responded to the moral crisis created by Napoleon's victories over Prussia in 1806 by developing a notion of *Bildung*, secular spiritual regeneration through education in the classics (Bruford 1975).

Local versions of the German model spread widely during the nineteenth century. By the 1880s, liberal humanism was being institutionalized in something like its modern form in university departments. But it is not easy to define this 'modern form'. In part, this is because humanists notoriously eschew formal definitions, explicitly stated hypotheses, and extended theoretical or methodological discussions. This makes it almost impossible or difficult for outsiders to say exactly what the humanities are, and easy for insiders to dismiss outsiders' definitions as misrepresentations. But the problem is more than one of rhetoric. Whereas we might say that most natural sciences are dominated by paradigms, controlling models of appropriate questions, methods, and forms of argument (Kuhn 1996), the humanities are normally the home of competing schools of thought (Culler 1987). By their very nature, humanistic forms of inquiry tend to multiply questions and methods rather than converging on sharply defined problems. Consequently, defining the liberal humanistic approach calls for an extended discussion rather than a manifesto, and any conclusions will inevitably be controversial.

In a useful lecture delivered in 1953, Ronald Crane defined the subject matter of the humanities as

all those things which, because not all men or groups of men can, or do, do them, are therefore not amenable to adequate explanation in terms of general laws of natural processes, physical or biological, or in terms of collective social conditions or forces. They are the things which we cannot predict, in any scientific way, that men individually or in groups will do, but which, when they are done, we recognize as signs, not of any natural or social necessities but of possibilities inherent in man's peculiar nature. They are, in short, what we commonly speak of as human achievements.

(Crane 1967: 8)

He identified four main elements in humanistic scholarship: 'linguistics, the analysis of ideas, literary and artistic criticism, and historiography' (Crane 1967: 9). But simply working in one of these areas does not make a scholar into a humanist:

Everything that men do has a natural and social basis or context, which humanists can forget only at the peril of making their studies of human achievements unreal and abstract. Every writer, every artist, every scientist, every statesman, every moral agent knows well that there are limits to what he can do, fixed not by himself but by the natural conditions in which he lives, the state of his culture or language, the logic of inquiry or artistic creation, the uniformities of popular psychology. These causes operate, however, more or less regularly, upon everybody; and they are not sufficient to account for those attributes of human achievements with which the humanist is distinctively concerned – the uncommon and remarkable attributes that separate, for example, the Greek language, as written by Plato, from the languages of the American Indians, the science of Newton or Einstein from primitive magic, the tragedies of Shakespeare from the average of Hollywood melodramas, the American Constitution from most earlier federations, the foreign statesmanship of Winston Churchill from that (say) of Stanley Baldwin.

(Crane 1967: 11)

Crane concluded that:

The sciences are most successful when they seek to move from the diversity and particularity of their observations towards as high a degree of unity, uniformity, simplicity, and necessity as their materials permit. The humanities, on the other hand, are most alive when they reverse this process, and look for devices of explanation and appreciation that will enable them to preserve as much as possible of the variety, the uniqueness, the unexpectedness, the complexity, the originality, that distinguish what men are capable of doing at their best from what they must do, or tend generally to do, as biological organisms or members of a community.

(Crane 1967: 12)

Such scholarship is necessarily highly empirical, based on close analysis of texts or art objects chosen for their importance rather than for their representativeness. Historians often use legalistic metaphors to describe the work that they do; they sift all the available evidence, weighing up its credibility, before coming to a verdict. Humanistic historians – and, I would suggest, humanists generally – have to immerse themselves in the primary sources. Statistical



patterns and probabilistic or comparative expectations are at best circumstantial evidence, with only an indirect bearing on the particular case at hand. Philology, connoisseurship, and sensitivity to nuance and context are the most important skills.

Liberal humanists rarely discuss the ultimate goal of their approach to the world, but when they do, they seem most often to be aiming at individual enrichment. Their stock-in-trade is idealism, and since the nineteenth century professional humanists, regardless of their party-political stance, have tended to be united by anti-industrial and anti-materialist rhetoric (Perkin 1989: 119–21). Deirdre McCloskey (1998: 297–9) notes that since 1848, virtually no major novels have represented bourgeois businessmen in a positive light, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that so many novelists owed their freedom to write to the fruits of bourgeois industry. Humanists certainly do engage in philological, historical, philosophical, and artistic studies of the desire for gain (e.g., Russell 1986), but gain has been less important as a research topic than as something that humanistic education must keep in check, diverting the trained mind towards loftier issues. The literary critics associated with the Cambridge journal *Scrutiny* in the 1920s and 1930s are probably the best-known example, arguing passionately that humanistic education could hold back the corrupting forces of commercialism, banality, and alienation.

The hostility that some ancient Greek authors showed towards those who grubbed after profit probably helped to support classical studies' prominent place in liberal humanism. Classicists played a leading part in the creation of this approach in the nineteenth century, and it has remained the dominant force within the profession. It is not hard to find Hellenists who will argue that 'Greek wisdom' can rescue modern America from 'the glorification of material culture . . . [and] the search for material and sensual gratification in place of spiritual growth and sacrifice' (Hanson and Heath 1998: 159). But the ancient Greeks' own desire for gain has not been a major research question for most of the last two hundred years. Eighteenth-century scholars, from the Encyclopedists to David Hume, had much to say about ancient Greek economics, but few of the increasingly professionalized classicists of the nineteenth century pursued this. In 1817 Augustus Boeckh began his two-volume study of Athenian public economy (which has not yet been superseded) by explaining that while the modern world admired Athens as 'the instructress of all liberal sciences and arts; the teacher alike of her own times and of posterity', his research was required because 'The intellectual faculties however are not of themselves sufficient; to produce external action they require the aid of physical force, the direction and combination of which are wholly at the disposal of money; that mighty spring by which the whole machinery of human energies is set in motion' (Boeckh 1828: 7–8).

Other classicists either did not accept this reasoning or concluded that Boeckh had said the final word, because there were few major publications on Greek economics for the next 75 years. Famously, despite his success as a banker,

George Grote had practically nothing to say about economic history. Only in the 1890s, when the social scientist Karl Bücher incorporated Greece into his larger evolutionary model of economic development, did Eduard Meyer and Georg Busolt make economics a prominent part of Greek historiography (Finley 1979 collects the major writings). As happened with Boeckh, the main result of their work was to close down discussion. There were some general studies of Greek finance (e.g., Guiraud 1905; Cavaignac 1908; Francotte 1909; Andreades 1933), debates over the terminology for trade and traders (Knorrhinga 1926; Finley 1935; Gomme 1937: 42–66), and occasional use of basic economic principles (e.g., Rostovtzeff 1941). But as Edouard Will recognized (1954a), the overall record was thin. Finley was not being unfair in summing up these few ventures as ‘a schoolboy version of Adam Smith’ (Finley 1965: 12). The obvious exception, Johannes Hasebroek (1931, 1933), drew his main inspiration from Weberian sociology, and after a hostile reception, was largely ignored until the 1960s (Cartledge 1983).

The conclusion is inescapable: so long as classics is dominated by the concerns of liberal humanism, economic questions will be marginal, having little to add to the central debates over the Greek spirit. A few scholars have argued over whether Pindar’s apparent interest in *misthos* and *kerdos* was a betrayal of classical values (e.g., Woodbury 1968; Gzella 1971), and Aristotle’s discussions of *chrematistike* always attract philosophical comment (although the best study [Meikle 1995b] is written from a Marxist perspective). But not until the late 1980s did anyone write a complete (albeit slim) philological monograph on the 52 attested words with *kerd-* roots. Andrea Cozzo (1988) argued that in Homeric Greek, there was really no such thing as *kerdos*; only distinct *kerdea*, skills characterizing warriors and traders, and allowing them to gain at the expense of others (cf. de Jong 1987). *Kerdea* were highly individualistic, threatening communal values. They had their place in warfare and trade, but if brought within the polis they could only be destabilizing forces. Not until the fifth and especially the fourth century did the expansion of small-scale retail trade within the polis dispel the association between *kerdos* and exploitation. *Kerdos* came to mean profit that could be derived from work as part of a larger process whereby economic relations replaced direct personal ones, perhaps because of the expansion of slavery.

Cozzo’s monograph, like Hasebroek’s more than fifty years earlier, is the kind of exception that proves the rule. Hasebroek and Cozzo both used traditional methods pioneered by classical philologists, but each found his inspiration outside the liberal humanist tradition. Cozzo cited Marx and Althusser prominently, related semantic shifts to Marxist categories, and closed his book with a long appendix on Marx’s theory of value as the objectification of abstract labour in commodities (Cozzo 1988: 97–126). Through most of the twentieth century Marxism has been liberalism’s main rival in the humanities in western nations. To a Marxist, liberal humanism can be nothing more than ‘the impotent conscience of bourgeois society, gentle, sensitive, and ineffectual’ (Eagleton 1983:

199). The true task of the Marxist humanist is to show how ideological superstructures (including ideas about gain) are determined by contradictions between the forces and relations of production, while also reflecting back on these contradictions in a dialectical process (see, e.g., Marx 1977). The work of historians is central to this project, but literary, artistic, and other kinds of critics also have a role to play, in exposing the ideological basis of culture. Liberal humanists aim to improve the individual and thereby society as a whole; Marxist humanists aim to undermine the bourgeois order. Rewriting classical history was important for Marx (1964: 71–99) and Engels (1972: 162–91), and a significant minority of western classicists has followed their lead (most importantly, de Ste. Croix 1981). I return to such work in sections III and V below.

### III Gain and the new humanities

Western Marxist scholarship went through important transformations in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in Paris (P. Anderson 1976, 1982). Jean Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Louis Althusser are only the best known members of intellectual communities which tried to adapt Marxism to other philosophical currents, including existentialism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, and post-structuralism (Khilnani 1993). The new forms of thought were tremendously varied, but generally downplayed Marx's economic determinism in favour of the constitutive powers of language and ideology. Rather than seeing culture as an epiphenomenon, reflecting and legitimating society's economic infrastructure and institutional structure, increasing numbers of humanists argued that such structures were themselves created culturally. Just as traditional Marxism broke down barriers within and between the social sciences and humanities, the new forms of thought merge into a composite genre of 'theory', drawing together literary, artistic, and anthropological work, and blurring the liberal humanists' distinction between high and low culture (Culler 1997: 1–17).

Foucault (1977: 139–64), drawing on Nietzsche, claimed to provide an 'effective history' which would subvert bourgeois reason. For Foucault, the history of thought could be divided into roughly successive '*épistèmes*', regimes of truth in which all forms of knowledge cohered into a dominant, diffuse, and controlling discourse, from which escape was impossible (Sheridan [1980] summarizes Foucault's thought). Deconstructionist literary critics took some of these ideas further still, arguing that the liberal hope of identifying the meaning of great texts was itself misguided, because meaning is indeterminate, indefinitely deferred by chains of signifiers which only lead on to other signifiers (Culler 1982).

The desire for gain became an increasingly central issue in the 'new historicist' movement that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s (see Veenser 1989). Much of the time, new historicists claim connections to Marxism, which has traditionally involved recognizing that economic relationships are determinant

in the final analysis. Developments in poststructuralist literary criticism render such reductionism highly problematic, and in practice new historicists devote little attention to this eventuality (see the extended discussion in Chandler 1998: 3–93). On the contrary, some have taken the decentring of the liberal subject implied by the emphasis on discursive systems and regimes of power/knowledge as the starting point for a radical critique of economic thought (see Woodmansee and Osteen 1999). This has coincided with a more self-critical attitude among some economists towards the metaphorical basis of their arguments (e.g., Klammer et al. 1988; McCloskey 1994). Some literary critics argue that far from being a scientific discovery of the logic of the desire for gain, the eighteenth-century *laissez-faire* revolution was but one dimension of a new set of subjectivities, narrativities, and gender relations, with political economy operating in the male sphere in the same way that the realist novel operated in the female (e.g., Nicholson 1994; Sherman 1996). Colin Nicholson (1994: 7–8) sees in the writings of this period ‘a complicated inscription of developing subjectivities constituting as they are being constituted by a developing political economy’, in which economics cannot be distinguished from ‘a discourse or language or discipline developed to represent such changes’. The implication of this ‘New Economic Criticism’ is that economic categories, like all other categories, are cultural constructions. Cultural analysis can show what interests were represented by these constructions, what interests contested them, and how such cultural conflicts were negotiated.

The new humanists have retained the liberal humanists’ particularism and reliance on close reading, but not their empiricism, putting in its place wide-ranging postmodern theory. They argue that the structures of everyday life are discursively constituted, and that the methods of the new humanities can expose the workings of contemporary regimes of truth. In many cases, they inherit from traditional Marxism the aim of undermining bourgeois social relations.

New historicism had a major impact on Greek studies in the 1990s (e.g., Dougherty and Kurke 1993b). Like scholars of eighteenth-century English literature, Hellenists reinterpreted what had previously been seen as ‘economic’ issues, outside the proper sphere of humanistic inquiry, as questions about the formation of subjectivities; thus economic history became the study of the economic passions (e.g., Cozzo 1991; Davidson 1997; Balot, forthcoming). A major debate has grown up around the origins and functions of coinage (Seaford 1994: 199–234; von Reden 1995: 171–217; 1997; Kurke 1999; Kim, this volume). For half a century, historians have argued that the Greeks first coined metal, probably early in the sixth century, for political rather than economic reasons (Will 1954b, 1955). Colin Kraay (1964) pointed out that the earliest coins then known were extremely large denominations, and did not circulate far from their cities of origin. He suggested that archaic poleis coined money to make state disbursements for buildings, mercenary troops, etc.: that is, the Greeks took over the Lydian device of coined money because of the logic of politics, not the logic of gain.

The new historicists have taken this political interpretation further, linking coinage to larger shifts in self-fashioning. Sitta von Reden (1997) stresses 'the ideological constraints of money use created by the ethical frame of the polis and the uneasy fit of coinage with honour, the body and "Self", which were part of that frame', and Leslie Kurke (1999: 12, 35) sees 'an alternative narrative behind the development of various money forms in Greece: an ongoing struggle over the constitution of value and who controlled the highest spheres of exchange, between the traditional elite and the emerging city-state', adding that this 'argument about political and economic contestation . . . is strangely shadowed by the tropes and troubles of identity-formation'. Both von Reden and Kurke find inspiration in Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch's (1989) model of 'transactional orders', with money taking on different meanings depending on whether it is perceived as being used to promote the long-term good of the community or the short-term gain of the individual. But whereas Kurke concludes from this that different interest groups reacted to the device of coined money in different ways, von Reden suggests that archaic Greece had an 'embedded money economy', in which 'money does not by nature signify anything in particular – economic relationships, egalitarianism, the market, etc. – but is symbolized by its repeated usage in particular institutions' (1997: 154). Kurke responds that 'Von Reden's argument . . . tends to suppress all trace of conflict in the momentous political and conceptual shift she documents' (1999: 18), and ties the differences in the ways Greeks used and responded to coined money to clashes between what I have called 'middling' and 'elitist' ideologies (Morris 2000: 109–191).

Kurke (1991: 228–39, 1999: 80–9) and von Reden (1995: 58–67) foreground *kerdos* even more than Cozzo did. Like him, they treat it as a culturally constructed category, changing meanings through time, institutional context, and (in Kurke's argument) status groups. But in contrast to Cozzo, who relied largely on traditional philological approaches, they have vastly increased the sophistication with which we must read the texts. If we treat the literary evidence for what it clearly is – the surviving residue of a series of competing self-fashionings, in which the negotiations that actors needed to make in shifting between transactional orders played a crucial part – we can account more fully for the subtle shifts in the semantic field of *kerdos*, and see its connections to a wide range of practices implicated in the construction of identity.

But only at a cost. Facing squarely the agendas behind the production of our sources seems to leave us trapped in a bloodless, intellectualized realm of competing discourses, where our data always come to us already implicated in elite acts of representation. In one of the founding documents of contemporary cultural analysis, written nearly thirty years ago, Clifford Geertz already worried about 'The danger that cultural analysis . . . will lose touch with the hard surfaces of life – with the political, economic, stratificatory realities within which men are everywhere contained – and with the biological and physical necessities on which these surfaces rest'. He suggested that 'The only defense

against it, and against, thus, turning cultural analysis into a kind of sociological aestheticism, is to train such analysis on such realities and such necessities in the first place' (Geertz 1973: 30). In focusing on economic categories, the new historicists are clearly following Geertz's advice. But it seems to me that the hard surfaces that are so prominent in the Greeks' own accounts of their archaic history do indeed disappear behind the complexities of the negotiation of meaning. Kurke criticizes von Reden for precisely this failing, suggesting that 'In her bland assertion of a metaphysical moment, von Reden has effaced actors and victims in a preeminently political struggle' (Kurke 1999: 18). But in describing her own method, Kurke explains that:

Because coinage is a polyvalent symbol within a complex symbolic system, the struggle I endeavor to reconstruct is a struggle fought *over* and *in* representation. At issue is who controls signification and who has the power to constitute the culture's fundamental hierarchies of value. While these issues have 'real life' implications – for example, in the sociological basis of citizenship and relative status of citizens – such a struggle over fundamental hierarchies of value can only be a discursive one, fought out in the codes of our texts, visual images, and signifying practices over the constitution of the cultural imaginary. Thus, it is not as if there is some 'reality' we are struggling to get to behind the texts, images, and practices, if we can just break through their screen by patient source criticism and sifting of 'facts'. In this 'contest of paradigms', the discursive structures of our texts (literary and visual) *are* the 'facts' at issue.

(Kurke 1999: 23)

Kurke and von Reden have changed the way historians think about coinage and *kerdos*, and how we read the texts. But for all its sophistication, a method of reading that leaves us unable to find an external grounding for economic categories in humanity's ability to appropriate nature or the equity of the distribution of its fruits is impoverished. Did the invention of money stimulate economic growth in Greece? If so, did this mean that ordinary people lived longer and ate better than before? Or did money allow a small group to concentrate more of the world's goods in their own hands? New historicist methods do not necessarily rule these questions out (although Kurke comes close in the passage quoted above). But on the whole, as one cultural anthropologist notes, 'unexotic topics once considered proper for culturally grounded social inquiry – economics, human ecology, and agriculture, among others – have been quietly stricken from our collective agenda' (Hefner 1990: xvii). In large part, the move from structure to culture and base to superstructure is required by the new historicists' guiding assumption that every presentation of data is always a re-presentation, and perhaps also that every representation is necessarily a mis-representation; but it seems to me that it may still be

possible to break through the screen (Morris 2000: 12–17). In the next two sections, I turn to ways of thinking about gain that start from assumptions about pre-discursive social and economic realities, and move back from these towards the complex data generated by real people.

#### IV Gain and economics

Generalizing about ‘social science’ is almost as hazardous as holding forth about ‘the humanities’. People who call themselves social scientists work in hugely varied ways, and, as I suggest in Figure 2.1, regularly overlap with self-styled humanists. This is particularly true among Marxists and feminists. But it will still be useful to offer an ideal type of social-scientific methods by way of contrast with the humanistic approaches described above.

The obvious distinction to draw between humanists and social scientists is that while the former tend to focus on particulars, the latter deal largely in generalizations. Like all the broad assertions I am making here, this is of course a statement of statistical probability. Deconstructionist literary critics, for example, sometimes make universalizing claims about the nature of linguistic communication, while historical sociologists sometimes make claims that are only true for a very narrowly defined range of societies, under very particular conditions. But that said, the contrast seems to me both broadly true and analytically useful in the present context – it is a stylized fact.

Second, while humanists generally begin work with a specific body of texts, social scientists generally begin from propositions or questions, drawing out of them logical implications that can be operationalized as hypotheses and sometimes (though not always) tested against carefully selected bodies of evidence. The data are there solely to test the thesis, not to be enjoyed, or understood in their own terms. The social scientist may rely on ‘stylized facts’, which may or may not be true, but which can be assumed to be true for the purposes of constructing a useful model; or s/he may dispense with evidence altogether, judging theories solely on their logical consistency, both internal and with other bodies of theory (see Reder 1999: 15–39).

Consequently, much more hangs on the explicit development of formal models than is the case in the generally more empiricist humanities. On the whole, social scientists prefer quantitative tests, which may require models to be given a mathematical form. As Crane noted (section II above), while variety, uniqueness, and complexity are the characteristics of good scholarship in the humanities (both new and old), simplicity, structure, and generalization matter more in the social sciences.

We could break down social-scientific approaches to gain in many ways, but for simplicity’s sake I suggest just two. The first of these, economic thought, starts from the fact of material scarcity.<sup>1</sup> The hard surfaces are very hard, and omnipresent. Not everyone accepts this starting assumption, of course; it is an axiom of Marxism that humanity began in a state of primitive communism, in



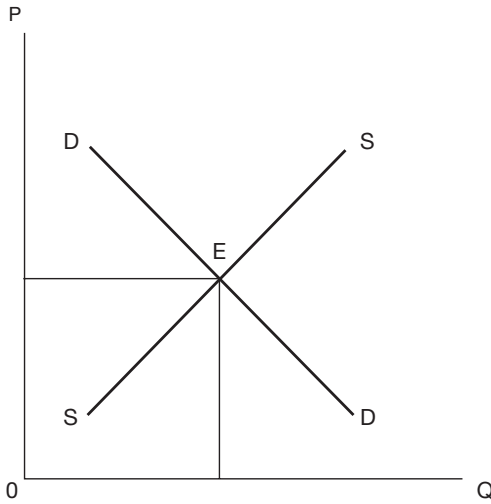
which their needs were few and were easily satisfied by nature's bounty, and will end up in a new form of communism, where each person will contribute according to his/her abilities, and receive according to his/her needs. Humanistically-oriented social scientists like Karl Polanyi (1957a) and Marshall Sahlins (1972: 1–39) have also posited pre-industrial societies that were affluent in the sense of having strict limits on their desires for gain, and much of the new humanities' fascination with consumerism and mass culture is driven by similar ideas that material scarcity is an ideological construct, not a given. There is nothing in Cozzo's (1988) survey of *kerdos*, however, to suggest that ancient Greek writers took any of these views. Hesiod, Solon, Xenophon, Aristotle and others criticized people for their insatiable lust for gain, and there is evidence that in archaic and classical Greece moderation was widely held to be an admirable virtue (Morris 2000: 114–85). But the facts of material scarcity and people's desire to maximize their utility were taken for granted. If infinite quantities of goods could be produced, or if human wants were limited in ways that allowed them to be satisfied without much effort, we could all have everything we wanted, rather like Hesiod's Golden Race (*Op.* 109–20). But in fact, as Hesiod pointed out, the gods have hidden the means of life. Goods are scarce, and men must all labour to get what they want (*Op.* 42–6). Economics is the study of how people can maximize their material well being in face of pervasive scarcity. This requires research into two things.

First, *efficiency*: how to organize society to use its resources as effectively as possible to satisfy needs and desires. Every society may be said to have a production possibility frontier, the point at which its economy has reached perfect efficiency, and the only way to produce more of one good would be to produce less of another. But no real society has ever existed on this frontier, and one of economics' major goals is to find out how to move closer to it.

Second, *utility*: economics assumes that we do not all want the same things, let alone the same amounts of the same things. The great breakthrough of neoclassical economics came in the 1870s with the formulation of the theory of marginal utility, the idea that as we increase our consumption of a good, the marginal (i.e., extra) utility that each unit brings us declines.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the demand curve slopes downward: the more of a good that is available, the less we are willing to give up for an extra unit of it, because we can maximize our utility more efficiently by investing in different goods, which bring us greater utility. The supply curve, on the other hand, slopes upward, because the more that people are willing to give up to obtain a particular good, the more profit there is in supplying it, and the more people will do so, thereby increasing the resources available to them to maximize their own utility. Where the supply and demand curves intersect, an equilibrium is created (Figure 2.2). This is the basic argument of modern microeconomics, the analysis of how individual agents (people, households, firms) interact.

The foundation of economics is the assumption that the desire for gain is hard-wired into the human psyche. That makes gain an interesting thing for





*Figure 2.2* The law of supply and demand. On the vertical axis,  $P$  represents the price per unit of the good or service in question; on the horizontal axis,  $Q$  represents the quantity supplied at that value of  $P$ .  $E$  represents the equilibrium between supply and demand.

psychologists to analyze, but economists can take it as a given, and move on to consider how best to satisfy this innate desire.

The concept of marginal utility emerged as a theoretical explanation for Adam Smith's observation of 'the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another' (Adam Smith 1970: 117 [bk. 1 chapter 2]). In effect, Smith argued that we maximize our utility not by trying to produce for ourselves everything we want, but by establishing a division of labour, some concentrating on one thing, others on another. In this way we can capitalize on natural or personal comparative advantages, and by coming together to exchange our respective wares we can increase the overall wealth of society. This leads to two further assumptions. The first is the *primacy of the market*. Smith famously noted that 'It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest' (Adam Smith 1970: 119 [bk. 1 chapter 2]). By selfishly pursuing their own profits, they end up maximizing the happiness of society as a whole by producing exactly the amount of each good that society as a whole wants. If people produce more beer, for example, than is desired, the law of supply and demand depresses the price, so that producers shift their energies to another commodity that gets a better price. If too many abandon beer, demand will outstrip supply, pushing the price back up until it reaches the perfect equilibrium. If the market is big enough and open enough, its invisible hand will bring into exchange exactly the right amounts of every commodity. We will

not all be perfectly happy with the outcomes, but more people will be more happy than would be the case with any other possible arrangement at that society's technological level, because the only driving force is individuals maximizing their utility.

Part of the butcher's, brewer's, and baker's self-interest is that their profits should continue to increase, and neoclassical theory holds that rational actors will direct part of their profits towards increasing their capital stock (at a rate determined by the marginal utilities of saving and consumption). Economists normally divide productive capital into human capital (education, training, etc.), physical capital (machines, agricultural improvements, etc.), and natural resources. The forms that capital takes depend on the state of technology, which determines what kinds of human, physical, and natural resources will be valuable; therefore people also invest in invention. The prediction is that people will invest in whatever part of the capital stock yields the highest rate of return. Saving and investment are the engines of economic growth, and growth follows logically from individuals' desire to maximize their present and future gain.

All these assumptions are, of course, fiercely disputed by Marxists; and the whole field of macroeconomics is based on the observation that market failures do occur, and that one of the state's major tasks is to intervene to prevent these or to mitigate their unwelcome results. But even limiting the primacy of the market to the status of a stylized fact leads to a second principle: *methodological individualism*. Microeconomics depends on the assumption that individuals are rational, and able to calculate equilibria for their actions in terms of marginal utility or indifference curves. The classic statement is that

Every member of society is to act as an individual only, in entire independence of all other persons. To complete his independence he must be free from social wants, prejudices, preferences, or repulsions, or any values which are not completely manifested in market dealing. Exchange of finished goods is the only form of relation between individuals, or at least there is no other form which influences economic conduct.

(Knight 1921: 78)

Real people do not act this way, and economists are perfectly well aware of it. But *homo oeconomicus* acts as a null hypothesis: if we assume the innate propensity to truck, barter, and exchange, then what we need to explain is those cases where people fail to act rationally to maximize their own utility.

Some economists criticize their own profession for its positivism (e.g., McCloskey 1994), while others insist that economists do not take data seriously enough (e.g., Reder 1999). The difference of opinion depends largely on perspective. Nearly all professional economists concentrate on positive economics, defined by Samuelson and Nordhaus as 'the facts of an economy –

the *what*, *how*, and *for whom* – and its behavior . . . Although these are difficult questions to answer, they can all be resolved by reference to analysis and empirical evidence'. They contrast this with normative economics, which 'involves ethical precepts and value judgments about the *what*, *how*, and *for whom* of an economy . . . There are no right or wrong answers to these questions because they involve ethics and values rather than facts' (Samuelson and Nordhaus 1998: 6). In this sense, mainstream economics is positivist. But if we make the common equation of positivism with empiricism, the field is anything but positivist. Economists like 'clean models' more than 'dirty hands' (Hirsch et al. 1990), preferring formal, mathematical tests to detailed historical investigations. Economic historians rarely win Nobel prizes.

To sum up: economics is a generalizing science with policy implications. It is about how to perfect efficient markets, assuming that the world is one of rational individual actors maximizing their utility in an environment of pervasive scarcity. Desire for gain is a fact of life, of little inherent interest. A neoclassical economic approach to Greek *kerdos* would concentrate on what Greeks produced, consumed, and distributed, how they did it, and for whom it was all done. But in fact there have been very few thoroughly neoclassical studies of gain in Greece, and the few attempts that have been made (e.g., Salvioli 1906; Heichelheim 1930; Cavaignac 1951; French 1964; and see Reger 1994 for neoclassical interpretations of the Delian price series) have been seriously flawed. I see three main reasons for this situation.

First, an ideological/institutional one: the vast majority of specialists on ancient Greece are educated in humanistic university departments, most often of classics. Nearly all their teachers work in liberal humanistic styles. Once they have completed a gruelling Ph.D. programme, overseen by these same professors, they will seek jobs and promotion from like-minded employers. Classics is in many ways the quintessential liberal humanities subject. It is normally defined as the study of two particular cultures at a particular point in time. For two hundred years, many humanists have felt that the achievements of these two cultures were so exceptional that every attribute of them should be studied in the single institutional locus of a classics department, rather than divided up among departments devoted to the archaeology, art, history, linguistics, literature, philosophy, etc., of the rest of the world. At some universities, hellenists do end up outside classics departments; but hardly ever in economics, political science, or sociology. On balance, individuals who are predisposed to want to contribute to large, comparative analyses, in which ancient Greece is just one among many cases, and in which discussion of empirical data may be subordinated to debates over theory and method, are less likely to persevere in classics than those who find particularism and empiricism congenial. To use the economists' phrase, they will tend to exit the game early. And those who do not exit – whether because they are confused about the discipline, or too obsessed with antiquity to let it go – may find that the professional rewards for speaking the language of neoclassical economics meagre

by comparison with those for entering the fray in philology or cultural history. A neoclassical economist would probably find the Kurke–von Reden debate over coinage uninteresting. Coined metal is an intermediate commodity, more efficient than barter but less so than banknotes. The gains in efficiency it brought about or its impact on rates of saving might be interesting, but the precise details of what its inventors thought they were doing are not. Recent finds showing that small change did circulate in the sixth century, and that Aeginetan and Corinthian coins travelled further than was apparent forty years ago (Howgego 1995: 7, 95–8; Kim, this volume), would probably reinforce the economist's assumption that the cultural details are mere window dressing. Kurke, on the other hand, dismisses John Kroll's (1998) theory of a gradual shift from weighed lumps of metal to coins by pointing out that 'such a narrowly economic explanation cannot account for the details of cultural difference and specificity' (Kurke 1999: 12).

Second, building on the first problem, the opportunity costs for hellenists to become economists and economists to become hellenists are high. Many economists in the days of Jevons, Walras, and Menger probably did have a classical education, but not any more. An economist wishing to study the ancient world would need to master a large and complex body of historical information, the minutiae of source criticism, and ideally learn Latin and Greek. Few find this price worth paying, given the probably low rate of return that the investment promises. Hellenists with North American liberal arts BAs will often have taken some college-level economics, but rarely seem to take this further. There are some exceptions (e.g., Cohen 1992; Reger 1994), and more among Romanists (e.g., Hopkins 1980; Kehoe 1992; Saller, forthcoming), but in Greek studies the normal result is the kind of schoolboy Adam Smithery that Finley criticized a generation ago.

Third, the abstraction of neoclassical economics often strikes ancient historians as meaning that it is simply not relevant to Greece. Knight's *homo oeconomicus* is patently not the same kind of creature that we read about in our sources. Information costs were high in antiquity, and transaction costs higher still. Markets were thin and fragmented, and usually very localized. A rational economic actor would have a hard time discovering which factors of production had the highest marginal returns to investment, and a harder time still capturing a high level of private returns. For Finley, this raised the following questions:

Given that no man, not even Robinson Crusoe, is absolutely free, how free was a Greek or Roman to choose among a range of possible 'employments', whether of his energies or his goods? More precisely, perhaps, how much weight was attached to what we should call economic factors in the choice, maximization of income, for example, or market calculations?

(Finley 1999a: 43)

His answer:

The economic language and concepts we are all familiar with, even the laymen among us, the 'principles', whether they are Alfred Marshall's or Paul Samuelson's, the models we employ, tend to draw us into a false account . . . to speak of a 'labour market' or a 'money market' is immediately to falsify the situation. For the same reason, no modern investment model is applicable to the preferences of the men who dominated ancient society.

(Finley 1999a: 23)

Finley correctly identified the core obstacles to a neoclassical approach to Greece, but was wrong to conclude that they rendered economic thought irrelevant (cf. Amemiya, forthcoming). On the contrary, one of the most valuable services that formal models can provide for historians is to show us precisely what dimensions of past economic systems most need explanation, where modernistic assumptions break down, and what analytical tools might make sense of the data (Rawski 1996). That means modifying the neoclassical world to take account of information and transaction costs, and the gap between the utility-maximizing actor thoughtfully pursuing *kerdos* and the actual people who lived in the past. Before exploring these ideas, however, we must examine a broader range of social-scientific approaches.

## V Gain and sociology

University departments of sociology cover a wider range of approaches than do most departments of economics. Some sociologists are scarcely distinguishable from cultural anthropologists, drawing much of their inspiration from the developments that I described under the heading of the new humanities (e.g., Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979). Others are virtually economists, importing the model of the rational actor and the methods of game theory (e.g., Coleman 1990). In this section, I concentrate on what seems to me to be the mainstream sociological tradition of approaching the issue of gain, going back to Weber, now often called the New Economic Sociology (Granovetter 1990; Swedberg 1991, 1993; Smelser and Swedberg 1994a).

Economic sociology, in this sense, differs from economics in two major ways. First, for sociologists the desire for gain is not an assumption but a problem to be analyzed; and second, where economists aim at prediction and policy formulation, sociologists typically seek generalizations about the causes and forms of economic action.

A number of consequences flow from these two differences in outlook. Smelser and Swedberg (1994b) have summed them up neatly in Table 2.1.

Sociologists generally accept the principle of material scarcity, and see the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange in pursuit of utility-maximization as

Table 2.1 Economic sociology and mainstream economics – a comparison (after Smelser and Swedberg 1994b: Table 1)

	<i>Economic Sociology</i>	<i>Mainstream Economics</i>
<i>Concept of the actor</i>	The actor is influenced by other actors and is part of groups and society	The actor is uninfluenced by other actors ('methodological individualism')
<i>Economic action</i>	Many different types of economic action are used including rational ones; rationality as <i>variable</i>	All economic actions are assumed to be rational; rationality as <i>assumption</i>
<i>Constraints on the Action</i>	Economic actions are constrained by the scarcity of resources, by the social structure, and by meaning structures	Economic actions are constrained by tastes and by the scarcity of resources, including technology
<i>The economy in relation to society</i>	The economy is seen as an integral part of society; society is always the basic reference	The market and the economy are the basic references; society is a 'given'
<i>Goals of the analysis</i>	Description and explanation; rarely prediction	Prediction and explanation; rarely description
<i>Methods used</i>	Many different methods are used, including historical and comparative ones; the data are often produced by the analyst ('dirty hands')	Formal, especially mathematical model building; no data or official data are often used ('clean models')
<i>Intellectual tradition</i>	Marx-Weber-Durkheim-Schumpeter-Polanyi-Parsons/Smelser; the classics are constantly reinterpreted and taught	Smith-Ricardo-Mill-Marshall-Keynes-Samuelson; the classics belong to the past; emphasis is on current theory and achievements

fundamental. But gain is not *the* driving force in the world; it is *a* driving force, wrapped up in a larger network of power relations (Weber 1968: 63–211; Swedberg 1998). In an influential typology, Michael Mann (1986: 1–33) subdivided the sources of social power into ideological, economic, military, and political. In different historical situations, different sources of social power will be dominant, and it is the sociologist's job to explain why. We cannot simply assume a world populated with rational actors, since, as Marx and Weber insisted, the dominance of the market is associated with a particular type of social structure that only emerged in the last quarter-millennium. Karl Polanyi (1944, 1957a) pushed Marx's and Weber's ideas in somewhat different directions, arguing that market exchange is just one of three ways to allocate resources; the other two basic types, reciprocity and redistribution, were historically prior, and more common. Both involved the 'embedding' of economic

activities in a wide range of other concerns. Desire for gain remains a basic category in sociological discussions of embeddedness (Granovetter 1985; DiMaggio 1990; DiMaggio and Zukin 1990), but other cosmological, political, and philosophical principles can override it. Consequently, sociologists put much more emphasis on description than do economists. They are rarely so empirically focused as humanists, but they nonetheless treat reportage as a major methodological issue (see Runciman 1983: 57–144, 223–300).

Economics and economic sociology are in many ways quite distinct, and to some extent represent competing models for thinking about gain (Granovetter 1990). Their protagonists use different technical languages, favour different methods and forms of evidence, and have different discourses of the proof. But there are also strong links between them. Both seek to generalize, even if economists tend to aim for universal, law-like propositions, while sociologists tend to construct typologies (Marx, of course, did both). Both fields are also presentist: economic history and historical sociology remain minority interests. When sociologists and economists do look into the past, particularly the vast reaches of time before the Industrial Revolution, the similarities between their approaches start to outweigh the differences. Drawing on neoclassical assumptions necessarily forces economic historians to ask why people have so rarely acted rationally throughout the history of the world, and to focus on institutions and ideologies, explored as much through traditional historical description as through formal modelling.

The most serious discussion of *kerdos* from a sociological perspective has been Moses Finley's. Contrary to what his critics often say, the model Finley advanced in *The Ancient Economy* (1999a [1973]) has never commanded majority support among classicists; but it is the only theoretically coherent vision of ancient economies to have emerged since the great German debates of the 1890s.

While a graduate student in New York in the 1930s and 1940s Finley worked for the Institut für Sozialforschung, and in the early 1950s took part in Polanyi's seminars (Shaw and Saller 1981). The model he built up between the 1950s and 1970s was strongly Weberian (Morris 1999). So far as Weber had been concerned, the interest of classical antiquity was that its large, complex economies never developed capitalism. Weber realized that the only way to explain the transition to modernity was by isolating those factors that were unique to the early modern west; and the only way to do that was through systematic comparisons, with classical antiquity providing a major case study. Polanyi accepted the same challenge, but added a political agenda, seeing in large, complex, non-market economies an argument for a more humane world without capitalism or communism. Finley narrowed the scope of inquiry to the Graeco-Roman world, but retained the same core questions, and followed Weber in suggesting that the key variable was the role of status, 'an admirably vague word with a considerable psychological element' (Finley 1999a: 51). Like Weber, he suggested that in Greece and Rome people were more concerned with status than with maximizing gain. Polanyi (1957b) had made similar



claims, but had suggested that Aristotle's musings on exchange in Athens in the 330s to 320s BCE show that a market economy was starting to break loose at that point. Finley (1974) responded that Aristotle was not really talking economics at all, but ethics, and that there was no incipient market economy in Athens. Only in Rome in the first century BCE did he see the possibility of the status system breaking down, but, he concluded, 'It did not break, however, it bent, it adapted, by extending the choices in some directions, not in all; in directions, furthermore, which can be seen to have followed logically from the very values that were being threatened and defended' (Finley 1999a: 61). Consequently, the desire for gain remained a secondary consideration for Greeks and Romans; concern for status was the independent variable that drove all else.

Finley suggested that his work provided:

[a] highly schematic model of the history of ancient society. It moved from a society in which status ran along a continuum towards one in which statuses were bunched at the two ends, the slave and the free – a movement which was most nearly completed in the societies which most attract our attention for obvious reasons. And then, under the Roman Empire, the movement was reversed; ancient society gradually returned to a continuum of statuses and was transformed into what we call the medieval world.

(Finley 1981c: 132)

This model provides the framework for thinking about *kerdos*. Finley argued that Homeric society (which he identified with real Greek societies around 900 BCE) was characterized by dependent peasants supporting a warrior elite (Finley 1978), and classical Athenian society by a citizen community practising reciprocity and alienating economic exploitation onto non-citizen slaves (Finley 1985c). He suggested that the bunching of statuses into free and slave took place in archaic times, through struggle from below:

The peasantry had won their personal freedom and their tenure on the land through struggle, in which they also won citizenship, membership in the community, the *polis*. This in itself was something radically new in the world, and it led in turn to the second remarkable innovation, slave society.

(Finley 1998a: 157–8)

Like Weber (1968: 303–4, 931), Finley suggested that debt was one of the few issues in antiquity around which status groups could coalesce as genuine classes and confront each other. His focus was firmly on inter-class relations. His emphasis elsewhere on the psychological aspect of status groups would presumably have made him take the new humanists' debates over the meanings



of coinage seriously, but he readily assumed that it was possible to read through elite self-fashioning to ground our texts on pre-discursive social and economic hard surfaces. He took it for granted that through comparative expectations and cautious speculation we could build up models, which we could then test for goodness-of-fit with the surviving evidence (Finley 1985a). In retreating from this social-scientific perspective, the new humanists have taken a step backward.

Finley focused on the one example of an archaic social struggle to have left sufficient textual traces for such a test, the upheavals leading to Solon's reforms at Athens in 594 BCE. He argued from prior expectations that three conditions were necessary for the emergence of a society of free male citizens underpinned by slave labour:<sup>3</sup>

The first, in a world which was overwhelmingly agrarian, is private ownership of land, with sufficient concentration in some hands to need extra-familial labour for the permanent work-force. The second is sufficient development of commodity production and markets . . . The third is a negative condition, the unavailability of an internal labour supply, compelling the employers of labour to turn to outsiders.

(Finley 1998a: 154)

Finley here took the desire for gain for granted: given adequate markets, landholders would instinctively expand their labour force beyond their immediate families to maximize their gains. But next, as any sociologist would do, he insisted that the landholders' access to labour inputs was constrained by non-economic factors – the social structure and meaning structures.

Finley's Weberian approach linked sociological thinking about gain with a humanistic concern for detail and context. But his opposition to economic assumptions prevented him from taking a broad enough view of the motivations at work in archaic Athens or the problems that the various groups of actors had to face. In the next section I try to do just this, while leaving room to take advantage of the advances humanists have been making in understanding Greek ideologies of gain.

## VI Gain and the New Institutional Economics

The gap between neoclassical assumptions and reality is obvious. We might formalize the neoclassical consensus (or, as Reder [1999: 43–65] calls it, the Resource Allocation Paradigm) as five assumptions (cf. North 1981: 4–7):

- 1 Information is freely and immediately available to actors: for example, if people stop wanting beer, everyone knows this, and can respond as they see fit.
- 2 Property rights are perfectly specified and costlessly enforced (i.e., transactions are free). That is, if a farm family increases output by working

harder, it will reap the benefits of this – as opposed to having to share them with rapacious landlords or conniving middlemen. This works the other way round, too; a Tolstoyan landlord who modernizes agriculture on his estate does not see his investment frittered away by feckless peasants and cheating overseers.

- 3 There are no diminishing returns to the acquisition of new intellectual or physical resources. That is, new inventions lead on to more new inventions, and nature is indefinitely renewable, without generating negative externalities.
- 4 There is always a positive rate of returns to investments – investors do not have to worry that the land they improve or the factories they build will be arbitrarily seized by someone else.
- 5 The private and social costs of childbearing are identical. That is, when the state of technology and other forms of capital call for a large labour force, families will also see the birth of children as a boon, and will act accordingly; and vice versa. This implies, of course, not only free information, but also control over fertility.

Douglass North suggests that:

From the viewpoint of the economic historian this neoclassical formulation appears to beg all of the interesting questions. The world with which it is concerned is a frictionless one in which institutions do not exist and all change occurs through perfectly operating markets. In short, the costs of acquiring information, uncertainty, and transactions costs do not exist.

(North 1981: 5)

Finley's response to this was to dismiss economic forms of analysis, whereas North concludes that 'precisely because of this non-existence, the neoclassical formula does lay bare the underlying assumptions that must be explored in order to develop a useful body of theory of structure and change'.

In a classic essay, Ronald Coase (1937) had argued that the only way to understand why individuals joined together in firms, rather than entering the market as Smithian utility-maximizing individuals, was to recognize that in certain situations such corporate bodies could introduce huge savings in transaction costs by substituting hierarchy for market negotiations. Building on this insight, North (1981, 1990) developed a school of thought now known as the 'New Institutional Economics' (Drobak and Nye 1997). He argued that a proper economic history calls for a theory of demography, a theory of institutions, and a theory of the stock of knowledge. Through most of history, as Robert Malthus showed, the rate of population increase tended to outstrip increases in per capita output, preventing any significant long-term change. To understand any historical situation, we need to know how demography was

changing and its impact on economic structure. North concentrated most of his attention on institutions and the state, arguing that most states operated with rules that maximized the rulers' income at the cost of depressing overall income. To explain this, he suggested, we need to formulate three further theories, of property rights, the state, and ideology. Finally, we need to understand how changes in demography and institutions interact with invention and the diffusion of new ideas.

In what follows, I use this framework to think about the Solonian crisis. I take an explicitly social-scientific approach in the sense of starting from analytical principles and building a model. The model necessarily relies as much on its internal coherence as on goodness-of-fit with the extremely scanty data points. Our primary sources are archaeology and Solon's poems.

The material record from early archaic Attica is particularly difficult to interpret; and we have to assume that Solon, like any statesman, saw his own times from a very specific angle. Clearly there were many other interpretations of the situation (e.g., Solon fr. 37 [West 1991/92]). To put together any sort of narrative, we have to rely on secondary sources, especially Aristotle and Plutarch, writing 250 and 700 years after the events respectively. The problems with these sources are obvious and have often been rehearsed (e.g., Andrewes 1982: 375–7). In what follows, I do not spend much time debating the historicity of specific claims, since virtually everything in our sources is open to challenge. I assume that the basic story of the cancellation of debts and redrawing of political boundaries does go back to Solonian reforms. Of the other laws attributed to Solon, some were probably genuine, and some not. Where the logic of my argument touches on measures attested in our sources, I mention them; but the texts rarely have probative value.<sup>4</sup>

I begin with some of the hard surfaces. First, the Greek world was expanding rapidly in the late seventh century. Greek colonists were pushing into the Black Sea and western Sicily, and Greek mercenaries were fighting in Egypt and Babylon. Exotic imports were being dedicated in sanctuaries all over Greece, and new wealth was making large, all-stone temples possible (even common). Compared to the wealth of Assyria or the pharaohs, Greece was still provincial. But compared with the Aegean's situation just a couple of centuries before, there was now a world of opportunities for people with goods to sell. We know few details of exchanges between Greeks and non-Greek peoples. But it seems like a reasonable guess that the Greeks could provide the East with raw materials (grains, silver, iron, humans) and modified goods (wine, olive oil, pottery), getting in return specialized raw materials (spices, tin, timber) and more sophisticated modified goods like metalwork, textiles, and perfumes. In the West, the Greeks probably mostly exchanged their modified goods for raw materials, and acted as middlemen passing on Near Eastern finished goods (Murray 1993: chapter 13 and Boardman 1999 review the evidence). Within Greece, the comparative economic advantage of any one region over another was smaller, although the distribution of Attic SOS amphoras suggests a local

Athenian advantage in oil or wine, and Corinth held another local dominance in ceramics until about 550 BCE, when Athenian wares displaced Corinthian. Metal ores were not evenly distributed, and inter-annual variability in rainfall meant that there would always be markets within Greece for grain, even if it is very unlikely that any polis depended on permanent food imports before about 500 BCE (Garnsey 1988: 3–117).

The overall quantity of goods being mobilized in this way was almost certainly only a tiny fraction of the gross product of Greece, with presumably at least 80 per cent of all production being consumed by the primary producers themselves, and no more than 1–2 per cent being transported more than a few dozen miles. But relatively small changes at the margin in the opportunity costs of finding markets for a wide range of agricultural and industrial products must have made a huge difference to the more entrepreneurial elements in society. These were the years when Kolaïos, a Samian merchant, realized a windfall profit of sixty talents when unexpected winds blew him to Spain (Hdt. 4.152). Herodotus tells us that Kolaïos was the most successful of all traders except Sostratos of Aegina, probably the same man commemorated in a late sixth-century inscription from Gravisca in Italy; the evidence for Greek involvement at Gravisca begins in the late seventh century, and some historians suggest that Herodotus' Sostratos would have been the grandfather of the man mentioned in the inscription, and therefore also active around 600 (see Harvey 1976; Torelli 1977). Although once again we know next to nothing about the organization of trade (Cartledge 1983), every indication is that a handful of Greeks were aggressively pursuing gain all across the Mediterranean, and doing very well out of it.

For men ready to take risks, there was much to gain from extracting everything possible from agriculture, mining, and petty commodity production. There was no insurance against shipwrecks and pirates, and Hesiod was perhaps wise to warn Perses against the dangers of sailing (*Op.* 618–94). The trader would need strong nerves. Hesiod (*Op.* 628–9, 646–7) seems to imply that a rational man would only pursue *kerdos* over the waves if desperation, hunger, and debt drove him to it. For all we know, this was a valid generalization, in which case we should assume that most Greeks stayed home. But apparently enough men in Athens were driven to try to become the next Kolaïos for Solon (frs 4.5–11, 6.3–4, 13.7–10, 71–7 [West 1991/92]) to feel the need to warn the rich against pursuing *chremata* so vigorously that they resorted to unrighteous means.

I begin, then, from a position of methodological individualism, asking what an Athenian inclined to pursue gain in this expanding economic environment would have done. Finley did not ask this question. Instead, as he explained, 'I assume that the decision [to shift towards slavery] was imposed not by those who needed to employ labour but by those Athenians whom they sought to employ. It is the unavailability of the latter, *en masse* not as miscellaneous individuals, that requires explanation' (Finley 1998a: 156). I disagree: this

change in the forms of extra-familial labour, which set the stage for the rest of Athenian history, was the outcome of a back-and-forth between rich and poor, that can only be explained by examining the options of both groups and the hard surfaces they lived on.

In 594 BCE Solon divided the Athenians into four property classes based on the grain output of their lands (Arist., *Ath. Pol.* 7.3; *Pol.* 1274a19–21; Plut. *Sol.* 18.1–2).<sup>5</sup> This suggests that the obvious way to satisfy the desire for gain was to market agricultural produce. There must have been other ways to engage in profitable activities, but the intensive development of silver-mining and the Athenian pottery industry only seem to begin around 550, and it is probably safe to assume that the vast bulk of Athenian goods traded around 600 was agricultural. Peter Garnsey (1992: 148; cf. Sallares 1991) suggests that in a ‘normal’ year, fourth-century Athenians obtained yields of about 4.8: 1 on wheat and 6: 1 on barley (or 625 kg/ha and 770 kg/ha at a sowing rate of 130 kg/ha). Classical Athenian farms seem typically to have been around five hectares (Burford 1993: 67–8). Yields around 600 BCE would almost certainly have been lower than those of the fourth century, given the lower level of technology, although farms may have been larger, given the smaller population. At certain points in the family life-cycle, farmers might be able to produce beyond their subsistence needs, marketing some of their crops without taking major risks; but Tom Gallant (1991: 72–101) suggests that overall, this was not a common pattern. Some brave farmers might have risked their very survival by growing specialized crops for the market, hoping to barter them for enough staples to make it through the year, but this would have been a very high-risk strategy.

Most likely, only those Athenians able to produce on a scale larger than the basic family farm could afford to take the risks necessary to pursue large-scale gain in the expanding Mediterranean economy. But they had their own problems. Arable land is in short supply in Attica (there are between 69,000 and 96,000 hectares, depending on who does the calculations). There was no open frontier. That said, the vagaries of inheritance and the alienability of land did allow some people to accumulate larger estates than their families could efficiently work. Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 2.2) even says that in the early 590s ‘all the land was in the hands of a few’. For those lucky ‘few’ (whatever his *oligoi* might mean), the major constraint was labour. The critical difficulty was probably one shared by most agricultural societies: the supply of free rural labour is normally non-homogeneous. That is, most farmers who have enough land to support their families prefer to make a living by working it, rather than by selling their labour-power through the market. Strong ideologies of sturdy yeoman independence are normally part of this reluctance, but concern with status tends to rest on more solid economic foundations. What Gavin Wright says of nineteenth-century America applies *a fortiori* to seventh-century Greece:

The family farm provided a substantial measure of security – against starvation, unemployment, or old-age destitution. In an era of

undeveloped and risky financial institutions, the family farm provided a means of accumulating wealth in a reasonably safe form – the wealth being largely the product of the family’s own labour in land clearing, fencing, drainage, etc. – and self-cultivation helped ensure that the earnings from this wealth were continuous and fell into the proper hands.

(Wright 1978: 47)

The supply of free labour was radically discontinuous. Curve S-S in Figure 2.3 shows this. There is a varying ‘price’ (in investment of time and affection as well as spending on legitimacy, food, and shelter) to be paid for the labour of family members ( $P_1$  on the vertical axis), but for the sake of simplicity we can reasonably represent the supply of labour within the family as perfectly elastic. Only in Aristophanes’ topsy-turvy world was the head of the household unable to count on controlling the labour of his relatives. But once the head of the household’s desire for labour reaches quantity  $Q_1$  on the horizontal axis (the number of people in his family), the labour supply becomes inelastic. If the employer is ready to pay enough, he will be able to hire all the free labour he wants, regardless of ideologies of self-sufficiency. The problem is that in an agricultural economy like that of seventh-century Greece, it would be hard for the extra value produced by adding another unit of labour (called the marginal product of labour, represented by curve MPL in Figure 2.3) to create enough

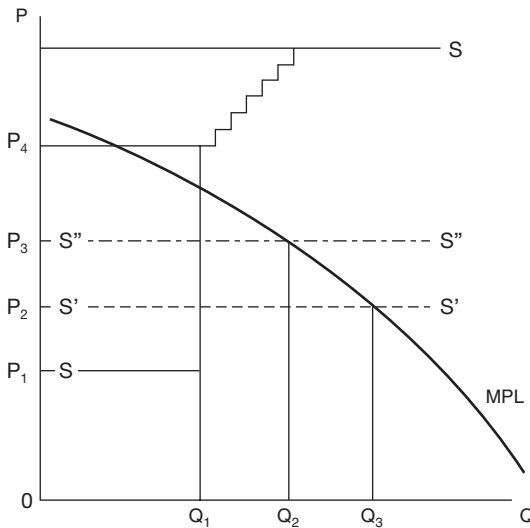


Figure 2.3 The supply of free, *hektemoroi* and slave labour in archaic Attica. On the vertical axis, P represents the price per unit of the good or service in question; on the horizontal axis, Q represents the quantity supplied at that value of P.

wealth for the employer to be able to afford to pay wages that would tempt desirable workers into the market. Throughout the ages, farmers have complained about the difficulty of hiring good help, particularly when land is relatively freely available. Some labourers will make themselves available at much lower rates (represented by the small incremental steps in S-S beginning at  $P_4$ : increases in what the employer pays will gradually generate small increments in the labour supplied), but it will be risky for the farmer to make permanent extensions to his operations on this scale, because he will not be able to have much confidence that his employees will stay.

There are three possible outcomes once the demand for labour passes  $Q_1$ . First, it may turn out that so few farmers can get reliable labour that the economy stagnates at a neolithic level, as indeed happened in most places for many centuries. Second, farmers may invest in physical rather than human capital, improving their land until they push the marginal product of labour so high (up and to the right in Figure 2.3) that they can afford to pay between  $P_3$  and  $P_4$ . Third – and this is historically the most popular response – they may invest in the means of coercion, developing institutions through which they can compel others to labour for them at much lower prices than a free market would dictate. This may have negative social returns, reducing the overall prosperity of society, but there are great private returns for the wealthy farmers able to reduce their neighbours to dependency. And this, of course, is what had happened by 600 BCE in Attica. In Aristotle's version, 'the poor were enslaved to the rich – themselves and their children and their wives. The poor were called dependents (*pelatai*) and sixth-parters (*hektemoroi*), since it was for the rent of a sixth that they worked the fields of the rich' (*Ath. Pol.* 2.2, trs. Rhodes 1984). By getting control of the institutions of the state, Aristotle's *oligoi* intervened in the labour market, to depress the labour supply curve from S-S to S'-S'.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the mechanisms through which *hektemoroi* were created, the cost of doing so was presumably greater than relying on family labour (hence the supply curve S'-S' [which, for the sake of simplicity, I represent as being perfectly elastic] crosses the y axis at  $P_2$ ). The wealthy would have to invest in legitimating this social order, providing some degree of supervision to make sure that they extracted at least their one-sixth, and perhaps initial loans to force the poor into debt-bondage. But the supply of sharecropper-labour at  $P_2$  was far more homogeneous than the supply of family labour at  $P_1$ . A farmer would presumably need five families of dependent *hektemoroi*, each surrendering one-sixth of their production, to maintain his own family at the same standard of living as the sharecroppers; in that case, the moderately 'wealthy' would probably also work their own fields, alongside their dependents. Farmers controlling the labour of dozens of dependent families might well choose to forgo the labour inputs of their own families, living in leisure. They could expand the system without any major increases in the cost of labour until they ran up against the limits of the land available to them and the marginal gains of adding labour declined to zero; at which point the only way to increase output



was to make a huge new investment by conquering territory and reducing the population to serfdom – what the Spartans did in Messenia, and tried to do in Arkadia.

But Athens followed a very different path from Sparta. Rather than expanding through wars of conquest, hektemorage broke apart in the 590s. To understand this, we must follow North's recommendation and focus on demography. The data are problematic; after a huge expansion of archaeological evidence for settlement between 750 and 700, most categories of evidence from Attica decline sharply between 700 and 550. I have argued (Morris 1987) that this tells us more about Athenian symbolic practices than about population levels. The city of Athens probably grew from about 10,000 people in 700 BCE to at least 25,000 in 500 (Morris 1991: 33–4). It is more likely that population grew rapidly across the seventh and sixth centuries (at an average rate of about 0.4 per cent per annum)<sup>7</sup> than that it stagnated and then grew truly explosively after 550. My guess (and it can be little more than that) is that if the population of Attica was something like 350,000 in the 430s BCE, then it was about 150,000–175,000 in 600 BCE. Much of the best land in Attica would already have been settled (and was probably in fact settled by 700 BCE, although at lower densities). The population had probably not yet reached the carrying capacity (Garnsey and Morris 1989: 103), but the events that began to unfold c. 600 BCE suggest that the combination of the constraints on land available and the limits of technology meant that the quantity of labour in use was approaching the curve MPL.

The increasing ratio of labour to land would have had serious consequences for both the wealthy and their *hektemoroi*. First, with more mouths to feed and more *oligoi* to support in style, owning land would be increasingly desirable. As the population not only within Greece but also in the larger Mediterranean world continued to grow, the potential profits from the land would increase, and – even in a world of highly imperfect markets – the price of land would slowly be bid up. But as the labourers working on the land multiplied, their value relative to that of the land was declining, whether the rich were aware of it or not. We have no way to quantify the marginal product of labour, but the most likely situation is that population growth produced a situation where landowners would actually want to get rid of some of their sharecroppers, or else renegotiate the terms of dependency. No doubt most landowners felt constrained by custom and by patriarchal obligations towards 'their' *hektemoroi*. But Solon's poems make it clear that some of the wealthy Athenians could have stepped right out of the pages of Samuelson, ruthlessly seeking to maximize their *kerdos*. The implication of much of Solon's poetry is that new market opportunities were transforming the ideology of gain.

From the perspective of the *hektemoroi*, the situation was more serious still. Assuming that Aristotle was right in saying that a rent of one-sixth of the crop was normal, they would have had to work harder and harder to squeeze more food out of the same land, while handing over 17 per cent of the fruits of their marginal labour to the landlord. As families grew, *hektemoroi* would be better



off getting their landlords to commute the one-sixth share to a fixed rent. If landlords refused to do this, their supervision costs would surely have risen, as incentives increased for tenants to cheat on the division of crops; and the costs of legitimating what could only be seen as an increasingly unfair system would also have spiralled. Sharecropper labour would no longer be available at  $P_2$ ; and as the value of  $P$  increased, hektemorage became less profitable for the owners/employers of labour.

There were three ways to resolve the situation: intellectual, demographic, and institutional. The first of these would involve technological improvements enabling Athenians to increase output such that a larger population could go on as before without changing the institutional arrangements. So far as we know, there were no such developments. The second would be a Malthusian check. Athenians might start to perceive the private return on a large family as negative, and reduce the population through later marriages, extended breastfeeding, or infanticide. Alternatively, as nutrition declined, mortality would increase and return the population to a lower level. Or Athenians could start to emigrate, voluntarily or not. None of these things seems to have happened on a very large scale. Instead, the structures of the state, law, and ideology gave way.

A simple neoclassical model would imply that the dice were now loaded in favour of the wealthy, because population growth would make the *bektemoroi's* labour less valuable, weakening their position in the market. But every indication is that in Solon's day, as in classical times, the labour market was not well developed. The entire hektemorage system probably rested on customary rights and obligations; a lord must have had certain responsibilities towards his tenants, and they would have the duty of staying on his land. In the days when the population was smaller and labour was a relatively scarce factor of production, there must have been unscrupulous farmers who would welcome runaway families. Insofar as that had been a concern for the wealthy, the declining relative value of sharecroppers' labour would strengthen the rulers' position.

But I would guess that in the situation at the end of the seventh century, and particularly given the thinness and discontinuity of labour markets, the factors working against the landlords' position would have been far more important than the possibility of increased competition among *bektemoroi*. I suggested above that population growth was driving up the landlords' transaction costs by requiring more surveillance and undermining the system's legitimacy. At just the same time, the ruling class's ability to meet these costs was being challenged. The literary sources are riddled with problems, but they tell us that Athens suffered military defeats in the late seventh century at the hands of Megara, Mytilene, and perhaps Aegina. The state's leaders were divided against themselves: around 632 Kylon had launched a coup, with Megarian backing, that ended in a bloodbath and Athens having to call in Epimenides from Crete to purify the city (Hdt. 5.71; Thuc. 1.126; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 1; Plut. *Sol.* 12). In circumstances that remain obscure, Drakon had tried to reform the laws and

perhaps the constitution around 621; and, according to Diogenes Laertius (1.2.2), the loss of Salamis to Megara caused such a crisis that Solon had to feign madness in order to rally the Athenians to fight back. Theda Skocpol (1979) has argued that this is precisely the sort of situation in which the ruling class's ability to resist agrarian unrest may begin to collapse, and North (1981: 20–32) similarly emphasizes how international competition and disputes over the leadership of the state can lead to major redistributions of property rights.

Further, persuading the population of the legitimacy of the social order was a particular problem in Athens around 600. Elsewhere in central Greece, a new vision of society that I have called the 'middling ideology' became increasingly influential after 750 BCE, but the archaeological record suggests that after sharing in mainstream developments in the late eighth century, Athens went its own way in the seventh. This involved not only instituting or restoring hektemorage just as other poleis were moving towards egalitarian citizenship, but also returning to religious practices which looked distinctly old-fashioned to other Greeks (Morris 1987, 1998, 2000). Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 2.3) suggests that in the eyes of the poor the entire system was unjust. In the absence of a technological solution to Athens' problems, population growth, international competition, and growing ideological costs interacted to shift the supply curve  $S'-S'$  upward.

We might hypothesize five possible outcomes in 594 BCE. The wealthy could:

- 1 try to turn the *hektemoroi* into chattel slaves. If the cost of doing this while keeping them on the soil that their families had been working for generations was too high to bear, the rulers could sell the slaves overseas, and perhaps use the income to buy new, non-Athenian slaves.
- 2 let hektemorage dissolve, expelling the sharecroppers from the land they had occupied, working it instead through chattel slaves (effectively a form of migrant labour operating under conditions of extreme exploitation) and, where it was available, hired local labour.
- 3 agree to take a smaller share of the *hektemoroi*'s produce, or even to commute the sharecropping arrangement to a fixed rent.
- 4 sell some of their land to the *hektemoroi*, perhaps by commuting the one-sixth share to a fixed rent and then treating it as a contribution towards the land's purchase price. The former landlords could then reinvest the payments in other activities, or buy chattel slaves to work on their remaining lands.
- 5 surrender their right to one-sixth of the produce of the land, and also surrender to the *hektemoroi* full ownership of the land they had been working. Any remaining lands could then be worked by chattel slaves or possibly free labour.

Unless population corrected itself, simply investing more in legitimating the current system and/or repression could not restore the landlords' profit rates.

Aristotle (*Atb. Pol.* 2.2) and Solon himself (fr. 36.8–15) seem to attest to response (1); tenants who could not pay their one-sixth, along with their wives and children, were seized and sold. This may have been going on for some time, if we take literally Solon's line that some of the slaves he redeemed had been overseas so long that they no longer spoke the Attic tongue. But this response can only have raised resistance and therefore transaction costs further; the fact that it did not become the favoured solution suggests that the costs were too high to be borne.

Nor was response (2) a realistic solution. Its immediate consequence would be to create a landless rural proletariat of former tenants. The choices open to the landless labourers would be to starve, emigrate, seek work at a price close to  $P_2$ , or revolt and push the costs of compelling their labour up towards  $P_4$ . The problem would not have changed.

Response (3) was the only one that would preserve a large part of Athens' institutions, but did so by shifting most of the costs of growing population onto the landlords. Responses (4) and (5) would end hektemorage, but on conditions far more favourable to the poor than responses (1) and (2).

Given the high costs of information, the weight (and likely complexity) of tradition, the thinness and discontinuity of markets, and rudimentary nature of state institutions, we should assume that different wealthy farmers tried different responses, and probably combined them, in efforts to solve their own particular problems. The result would be massive ideological turmoil, probably dominated by exactly the kind of questions about the long- and short-term transactional orders that have been central to Kurke's and von Reden's work on the economic imaginary. We have too few data to be able to say much about how these proceeded in turn-of-the-century Athens, although Ryan Balot's (forthcoming) book on greed in Athens offers a nuanced and subtle reading of Solon's poetry.

Four of the five possible responses suggested above called for a shift towards chattel slavery. This required (a) ideological acceptance of the rightness of owning slaves, (b) a reliable supply of slave labour, and (c) that slave traders would put people on the market at a price lower than that of any other possible source of reliable extra-familial labour. Finley (1998a: 154, 158) was wrong to assert that the only issue that mattered in the 590s was whether an internal supply of Athenian dependent labour was available or not: the hard economic constraint of Athenians' ability to buy slaves below the cost of the marginal product of labour was also decisive. Condition (a) had applied since Homer (Garlan 1988: 29–37). We know little about condition (b). Athens' unsuccessful wars probably did not bring in many slaves, so supply depended on traders bringing slaves to market, probably chiefly from the Balkans, Anatolia, and Ukraine. Supply curve  $S''-S''$  in Figure 2.3 represents condition (c). So long as slaves were available anywhere between  $P_1$  and  $P_4$ , the institution would flourish (to varying degrees). But if the costs of getting slaves to Attica and supervising their labour rose above  $P_4$ , then landowners would be better off paying whatever it took to lure other workers into the labour market, so long as they remained below MPL. By 508

there were apparently many slaves in Attica (Arist. *Pol.* 1275b37),<sup>8</sup> so we must assume that all these conditions were met in the sixth century.

Rich and poor alike were struggling with a failing system, and according to Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 5.2) and Plutarch (*Sol.* 14.3), they agreed in 594 that Solon should be appointed as archon, the chief official of the state, and 'reconciler' (*diallaktes*). Finley ignored the secondary sources' statements that all groups were in favour of Solon, as well as his self-representation as a neutral arbitrator, giving everyone some of what they wanted. Solon negotiated a settlement, in effect a macroeconomic intervention respecifying property rights. By cancelling all existing debts and forbidding loans secured on the borrower's person, he ruled out responses (1) and probably (3). His poems constantly emphasize his concern with fairness, so we should probably assume that in his judgment this *seisachtheia*, the 'shaking-off of burdens', was the only way to restore the legitimacy of Athenian society. Solon's poems are less clear over whether he instituted response (2), leaving the rich in possession of the land and creating a landless rural proletariat, or (5), securing the poor in possession of the land they had been working; or whether events tended towards the compromise solution (4). I believe that (5) is most likely. I find textual support in Solon's fr. 36.4–7, in which he calls as witness the goddess Earth, 'whose many fixed *boroi* (marker stones) I removed, and made her free, who was once enslaved'. I assume that the *boroi* recorded the claims that the rich made on land that the sharecroppers working it regarded as rightfully theirs; and that the *seisachtheia* included redefining rights in the land as well as in human capital. Some historians point to fr. 34.8–9, where Solon says that he did not arrange things so that the bad should have equal shares of the earth of the fatherland with the good, as evidence that he did not redistribute the land. I assume that he is saying here that he did not institute a settlement like that which the Spartans ascribed to the legendary Lykourgos, dividing all the land up into equal lots. But even if I am wrong, and Solon did aim at response (2), by the end of the sixth century (and very probably by the time of Peisistratos' tyranny [546–27 BCE]) Attica was a land of independent farmers, in possession of their own fields. Response (2) would not have addressed the underlying demographic problem, and if Solon did pursue it, we must assume that most landowners eventually resorted to response (4), leading to the same outcome.

Solon's major contribution perhaps lay in clarifying property rights and setting up institutions for their enforcement. The vagueness of our sources over who exactly owned the land, what it meant to be a *hektemoros* or a *pelates*, and the line between these statuses and slavery, may well reflect a genuine situation of poorly specified property rights in the late seventh century, not just confusion caused by the passage of time. The reforms of 594, and/or events following from them, confirmed all native-born Athenians in possession of their own bodies and of the lands they worked. The richer Athenians were confirmed in possession of at least part of their estates, and of absolute rights in the persons of chattel slaves they imported from overseas. We must remember that 594 was a

negotiated settlement; while some of the wealthy will have been ruined by the loss of physical and human capital, others may have been quite happy to get out of the quagmire of hektemoragē and to reap the benefits of shifting to slave labour. Had it not been so, it is hard to see how Solon's reforms could have survived.

Solon apparently understood the difficulties. There is a story that he went overseas for ten years, after making the Athenians promise to keep to his laws until he returned (Hdt. 1.29; Arist. *Atb. Pol.* 11.1). Another story says that he required all archons to swear to observe his laws, and decreed that the laws could not be changed for one hundred years (Arist. *Atb. Pol.* 7.1–2). Not content with promises, the stories run, he also took institutional steps, changing access to political office (*Atb. Pol.* 7.3–8.5), giving everyone the right to bring lawsuits on behalf of a third party, and providing the right of appeal (presumably against the archons' decisions: Arist. *Atb. Pol.* 3.5) to popular lawcourts. Aristotle also says that Solon deliberately worded his laws ambiguously, so that the power of interpretation would always be in the hands of the people (*Atb. Pol.* 9).

Much more could be said about Solon's reforms and the problems of the evidence, but I hope to have made two points with this brief discussion. First, that Finley's theoretical proposition that economic models cannot help us make sense of ancient Greece is unfounded. It seems to me that the obvious criticism of the model I have set out in this section is that it merely re-describes in more formal language the same process of the withdrawal of local labour that Finley pinpointed. To the extent that this is true, it means that simple models like Figure 2.3 *are* useful for ancient historians. A pure neoclassical model cannot accommodate the details of what we know about Athens in 600 BCE, but then that is not what neoclassical models are for. The basic concepts of supply and demand, price elasticity, and changes in productivity at the margin, however, can describe just those phenomena that Finley emphasized.

Second, looking at the Solonian crisis as I have done in this section does more than merely redescribe it. It draws attention to questions that Finley did not try to explain, such as why the crisis happened exactly when it did; and foregrounds explanatory issues that he downplayed, such as demography, technology, the attitudes and responses of the wealthy, Solon's role as a negotiator, Athens' international situation, the relative price of different forms of labour, the specification of property rights in people and things, the creation of institutions for measuring and enforcing them, and the legitimacy of Athenian culture. It takes much further the promise already present in Finley's work for a thoroughgoing economic sociology, combining the best in the social-scientific and humanistic approaches.

## VII Conclusion

In section VI I briefly discussed one major problem in the history of *kerdos*. A proper analysis of *kerdos* along the lines of the New Institutional Economics

would draw on the strengths of all the approaches I described in sections II to V. It would begin with the analytical rigour of economics, but would temper neoclassical abstraction by recognizing the messiness of real life, the place of gain within a larger network of social forces, and the importance of transaction costs and ideology. By their very nature, these phenomena require sociological and humanistic analysis. The new humanists have crafted subtle tools for coming to terms with ancient beliefs; within this framework, they would be reconnected to Geertz's hard surfaces. Finally, although *kerdos* has not been a major issue within liberal humanism, the importance of Solon's statesmanship to the eventual outcome in Athens also gives the questions and methods of traditional humanists a large part to play.

But having a catholic appeal is not a very compelling argument for favouring one way of thinking about the world over another. The different approaches to gain that I discussed in sections II to V each rest on very different assumptions about what is important in the world, and what scholars should be trying to explain. There would be little profit in trying to reduce this diversity to a single controlling model of how to investigate Greek *kerdos*. But that said, I want to close by suggesting that the sorts of question that a neo-institutional approach raises are particularly valuable. For the first time, we might be able to foreground the relationships between institutions and economic growth in Greece (Morris, forthcoming), and between the hard surfaces and Athenian democracy and high culture (cf. Boedeker and Raafaub 1998). Whatever perspective we bring to the study of gain, these must surely be among our key questions.

## NOTES

- 1 There are many introductions to economic principles, but Samuelson and Nordhaus (1998) is by far the clearest.
- 2 Screpanti and Zamagni (1993) is the best brief introduction to the history of economic thought, though they sometimes assume knowledge of economic techniques. Economists nowadays rarely appeal to the language of marginal utility, preferring to ground supply and demand on the geometrical analysis of indifference curves, derived from Pareto's work (see Samuelson and Nordhaus 1998: Appendix 5).
- 3 Finley emphasizes the differences between the emergence of Athenian and North American slavery (1998a: 156–7), but in *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975), Edmund Morgan had argued for a very similar set of necessary conditions for the growth of slavery in Virginia after the 1660s.
- 4 Hopkins (1978: 2–3 n. 4, 19–25) advocates a similar method.
- 5 Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 7.3, says Solon established the census classes *kai proteron*, 'as formerly'. Some historians think that the output-based classes went back to Drakon (c. 621 BCE) or even earlier; others think that there were three military classes of knights, hoplites, and thetes, and that Solon then added a fourth class for the very rich (Rhodes 1981: 137–8; cf. Foxhall 1997b).
- 6 Exactly how they reduced the poor to this status is lost in the mists of the Dark Age. The sources are clear that manipulation of debt was part of the story; I set out my own views in Morris 1987: 173–9, 205, 2000: 292–305; see also Gallant 1982; Andrewes 1982; Foxhall 1997b.

- 7 In comparative terms, this is a very high rate. Ansley Coale (1974: 42) estimated that the average rate of population growth worldwide in the last five millennia BCE was around .036 per cent per annum, accelerating to .056 per cent in the first millennium.
- 8 Aristotle's wording (*ephuleteuse xenous kai doulous metoikous*) may imply that even at the end of the sixth century property rights in people were still loosely defined, and the distinction between slaves and migrant labourers may have been somewhat fuzzy. It also suggests that we should imagine a certain number of non-chattel-slave migrant workers willing to come to Attica and sell their labour (perhaps at the times of peak labour demand) at prices between  $P_1$  and  $P_4$ .

## SMALL CHANGE AND THE MONEYED ECONOMY

*H.S. Kim*

In recent years, the role of money in the Greek world has been at the centre of a vigorous debate as cultural historians and economic historians have advanced very different opinions on what impact money had on Greek society. This has been nowhere more so than regarding the beginnings of Greek coinage where historians and numismatists have rekindled their interest and come forward with a range of sophisticated interpretations for the origins, meaning and functions of money. The debate has at times become quite heated as the sides have clashed as much over differences in approach as in their eventual differences in conclusions.

As fundamentally different as the sides may appear on the surface, I am inclined to believe that the divide between them may have more to do with emphasis than on real differences in direction as much common ground can be established between the two. They share the common goal of leading coinage away from its monolithic past as a function of the market-based economy and into a new age in which its role in society can be better understood. Their differences lie in how to approach basic evidence for developing the social context for coinage. The purpose of this article is to offer one case in which economic studies can be used to complement cultural historical studies of money.

In a series of recent works, S. von Reden (1995, 1997) and L. Kurke (1991, 1999) have substantially altered the landscape of early coinage and money, by examining their role within the social context of the archaic Greek polis. In contrast to the dominant market-based accounts of early coinage, they have stressed its symbolic nature, whether as part of a continuum in the development of money in social exchange (von Reden 1997) or as objects symbolic of conflicting civic ideologies and controlled by certain groups within society (Kurke 1995). In addressing the question of what impact coinage had on society at the time, these explorations have been of great importance as they present new evidence and provide a perspective on money which has not been approached in detail before. They have also repackaged the question of early



coinage in a narrower context, the polis, and have shown how the development of coinage and money was embedded in its social set-up.

For those who have taken on board these studies, Kurke and von Reden provide an exciting new direction for the study of the beginnings of coinage, resuscitating an otherwise moribund topic. Their approach in developing the sociology of early coinage has sharpened the link between coinage and the Greek polis and has placed coinage back onto the agenda of Greek history. We should have little doubt that the discussion will run for some time, but the basis for future discussion has now been established. Early coinage has become as much a study of the development of concepts of money and social exchange as it is a study of the material evidence alone.

Where some criticism may be levelled is regarding the matter of balance and whether the 'society' they investigate is overly restrictive to the activities of the few. When considering the effect money-use and coinage had on society, we should keep in mind which segments of society our evidence sheds light on. If, as Kurke argues, coinage was at the centre of a growing ideological conflict between traditional elites and new elites, the conflict reflects tension within a relatively high level of society. How coinage was received or even perceived by the wider society is unknown. Equally, should we understand that the use of money in the social contexts such as marriage, the law, and athletic games reflects money-use in society as a whole? Or are they again representative of the activities of the few for whom literary and epigraphic evidence serves witness?

What concerns me is that while literary and epigraphic evidence can highlight key social activities and provide evidence for social conflict, we should not suppose that we have the full picture before us. There may be a need to step back and cast a critical eye across the landscape which has formed. On the one hand, we should appreciate how coinage can occupy very different roles in our conception of cultural values. However, we should also feel the uncomfortable twinge that we may be cornered into a limited and perhaps biased set of evidence and that we may have wandered too far from the coins themselves and the 'hard surfaces' this form of evidence can provide. In this article, I propose to examine the impact money and coinage had on society and to consider how extensively money was being used by posing two questions: When did a 'moneyed economy' develop in the Greek world? What sections of society participated in the growth of money-use?

### Small change

One reason why these questions need to be posed is because there is a widespread belief that a moneyed economy developed in the Greek world only from about the middle of the fifth century and onwards (von Reden 1997: 156; Kraay 1964: 89). The evidence for this is mainly negative, in particular in the absence of small change during the early stages of Greek silver coinage (Kraay 1964.). The

popular picture we are led to believe is that early silver coinage consisted mainly of large denomination coins, of eight to sixteen grams in weight. As the value of any one of these coins would have been significantly high, it has been taken that they could not have been used for low-value transactions. Add to this the fact that most of the scattered references to coins during the late sixth and early fifth centuries refer to large denomination coins such as staters and drachmae, it seems quite reasonable that this view of early coinage, being used for a limited range of activities and by a limited segment of society, has grown.

What we are left with is a curious situation in which it took a moneyed economy some seventy-five to one hundred years to develop after the striking of the first silver coins (post *c.* 550 BCE). The emergence of a moneyed economy would come of age when states began issuing small change in quantity and the uses for small change became part of the workings of civic life. According to some one of the prime stimuli for this was when low-value political pay was offered to the wider citizen body for activities such as jury duty, assembly pay, or military pay (Rutter 1981: 5–6; Pritchett 1971). Once this had occurred, coinage would have percolated through to the level of potentially all thetes, and we would have the effective monetization of the Greek, or at least the Athenian, economy.

I think we should be concerned with this now because of the way this rather late date affects our view of the impact coin use had on society in general. If early coinage was used by socially exclusive groups, such as elites or merchants, our explanations of its impact on society would have to be directed towards specific segments of society. Down this path Kurke, Seaford, and others have investigated the 'threat' or 'opposition' coinage posed to traditional society, pointing to the aristocracy as the group which found its traditional forms of exchange disrupted by this new disembedded medium of exchange (Kurke 1995: 42; Seaford 1994: 199). Yet, we might wonder whether we ought to consider how all of this may have affected the lower strata of society as well. Did they have to wait all these years for the immediate effects of coinage and money to 'trickle down'?

One reason why these questions need to be raised is because this picture of a relatively late developing moneyed economy is becoming very difficult to support nowadays. In recent years, numismatists have seen a fundamental shift in our perception of the prevalence of small change as countless numbers of early fractions have appeared where previously none or few had been known (Kim 1994: 23–6). Few areas of the Greek world have been left unaffected by this, and what is beginning to emerge is a picture in which from the very beginnings of silver coinage both large and small denomination coins were being struck in quantity at the same time. Early coinages, such as the Croesids, the Athenian *Wappenmünzen*, Aegina, and Corinth all display active productions of small denominations. Coinages which were considered devoid of fractions are now believed to possess substantial fractional series as the fleshing out of the material evidence has turned our mainly negative assessment into a cautiously positive one.

One case offers the opportunity to gauge how large the scale of production of small change could be. The case involves a relatively small archaic hoard from Ionia, consisting of coins (provisionally attributed to archaic Colophon c. 525–c. 500) and uncoined silver (*Coin Hoards* I, 3; Kim 1994). In total weight the hoard came to just over half a kilogram, of which the coins weigh about quarter kilogram. However, this relatively modest weight of coins yielded some 900 pieces, all minted to two denominations of 0.21 or 0.42 g. But what is even more remarkable about this hoard is what it can tell us about the scale of coin production. The 900 coins were produced from nearly 400 different obverse dies. The large number of dies which went into the production of this sample of 900 coins indicates that we are dealing with a massive scale of production. Even if we were to assume very conservatively that a die could only produce 1000 to 5000 coins in its lifetime, the scale of the minting would still range from hundreds of thousands to millions of pieces. For a coinage which we presume was used locally, this substantial volume of coinage is impressive and is also suggestive of a strong local requirement for low denomination coins.

It should be stressed that what we see in the Ionian hoard is probably more typical of Asia Minor than it is of the rest of the Greek world. Elsewhere levels of production are more modest, yet still substantial enough to think of small change as a normal part of early Greek coinage. Still, we do need to acknowledge that the production of small change was by no means consistent throughout the Greek world. Some mints such as Syracuse and Chios did not produce small change until well into the fifth century. Other mints, such as Eion, Miletus and Massalia, produced the bulk of their very substantial coinages as small change. Even a short-lived coinage, such as the coinage produced by the Samians at Zancle from c. 494/3 – 489/8, included the minting of small change in a complex series of denominations (Clain-Stefanelli 1987: 48–50). Finally, we have to remain aware of the bulk of material which awaits further investigation. In some regions such as Macedonia and Asia Minor there still exists a multitude of types which defies attribution to known cities.

The picture of small change has altered dramatically from even as recently as a decade ago, as new finds have bolstered our perception of how early and how substantial small change could be. What I would like to suggest is that this quantitative shift in our perception of production levels should also signal a qualitative change in our perception of the development of the moneyed economy. Contrary to earlier observations, early coinage was by no means limited to coins of high value, but included a range of low denomination coins as well. It is this presence of small change early in the history of coinage which should change our perception of what social groups could have used early coinage and what social groups may have had a stake in the development of coinage. If coinage no longer has to be the domain of elites, whether as traders or participants in the rarified airs of recorded social exchange, and can include a broader cross-section of society, then our assessment of what impact coinage and money had on Greek society must include non-elites as well.

## The uses of small change

The recent influx of small change provides us with an entirely new picture of the production side of small change. But what can be said about how small change was used and what does evidence on its use suggest about the extent to which a moneyed economy had developed? Evidence for the use of small change in the late archaic and early classical periods comes in two forms: material evidence on patterns of circulation and epigraphic evidence relating to various contexts in which small change was required.

The pattern of circulation for small change has an important bearing on how we assess these higher levels of production. The production of large volumes of coinage need not reflect a strong local demand for coins, especially if a significant proportion of the coinage escaped or was exported from its city of origin. The point which should be stressed about small change is that its pattern of dispersal differs substantially from what can be observed in their large denomination counterparts. Large denomination coins could be and were used externally, with some coinages displaying movement throughout the Greek world. Small change on the other hand was predominantly used relatively close to its city of origin.

While detailed studies of small change await further work, a recent study of the coinage of Acanthus includes a welcome survey of the dispersal of fractional coins from their city of origin (Tselekas 1996: 183–4, maps 4, 5, 7). In his study Tselekas has built up a picture of the movement of silver fractions (mainly *tetrobols*, but also *hemiobols* and *tritertartemoria*) which shows a very limited range of movement for fractional coins outside the city. Nearly all finds are restricted to the Chalcidice and eastern Macedonia. A useful control is to compare the data for silver fractions to the data for the distribution of the later Acanthian bronze coins. Unlike silver coinage, bronze coinage is essentially a token coinage and had little value outside the region in which it was recognized. A comparison of the two yielded nearly identical patterns. When both of these forms of small change are compared to the distribution pattern for the tetradrachm series the contrast could not be greater (Tselekas 1996: map 6). Tetradrachms of the mint escaped in abundant quantities throughout much of the Greek world.

While the paucity of studies on the circulation of small change limits developing a richer picture of the movement of fractional silver, what is known supports the notion that fractional silver was used close to its city of origin. This stands in contrast to their large denomination counterparts which were also used externally in significant volumes. Exceptions to this rule are to be expected as fractional silver was still intrinsically valuable, but in most of these cases the inclusion of fractional silver is quite literally outweighed by the overwhelming amount of large denomination coins which constitute the hoard. The overall impression of fractional silver being used predominantly locally remains unchanged.

If we accept that small change was used as a local or regional currency, the levels of production we see are even more impressive. How then was it used in

the local economy? To guide us a handful of scattered early references have survived which show small change being used in a range of commercial and non-commercial activities. While most inscriptions dealing with money of the late archaic and classical periods are geared towards documenting fines, loans, gifts, tribute, or taxes of relatively large scales, a number of early sources have survived which document the use of small change in a range of legal, religious, and commercial activities.

We would expect commercial contexts to provide the bulk of references to small change. However, prior to the end of the fifth century there are few records of these ephemeral marketplace activities. What does survive comes from material finds, namely in the form of scratchings which appear on the feet of Attic pottery from as early as the last quarter of the sixth century (Johnston 1979: 33–5). Some pots had marks of value scratched on them, indicating their price in obols. What is revealing in these cases is not just that the pots had marks of value placed on them, but also that prices and terms were abbreviated, indicating some familiarity with the use of small change.

The other references all come from non-commercial contexts. One of the earliest references to small change appears on a legal document from Marathon from *c.* 500 which records a fine expressed in obols (Vanderpool 1942). More surprising are the cases in which small change appears in inscriptions relating to religious ceremonies. A decree of Andros from the first quarter of the fifth century (Daux 1949; Jeffery 1990: 298, 306 no. 53) stipulated that each participant in a religious festival was to donate an Aeginetan obol on each of the days of the festival. For participants in the induction ceremonies of the Eleusinian Mysteries (*c.* 460), various sums in obols and hemiobols were to be given to officials presiding over the ceremony (Meritt 1945). In both these cases, what is noteworthy is the use of small change and how it served (we presume) as substitutes for more traditional offerings.

Despite being few in number, these references to small change are of great importance as they offer a glimpse at how at the beginning of the fifth century small change had begun to infiltrate various aspects of civic life, from commercial to legal to religious exchange. Their mere existence is noteworthy as we would not expect to find recorded sums of such low values, and the number of non-commercial references is even more so. They provide evidence from the consumption point of view of how a moneyed economy using the medium of small change was beginning to take root.

### And the moneyed economy

In addition to correcting an earlier notion about the prevalence of low-value coinage, the new evidence of small change also has the potential of offering new insights on how extensively money-use may have spread within populations as a whole. If, as earlier pictures of coinage have been used to show, early silver coinage could only be used for large value transactions, it is very difficult to

envisage coins being used for any but a few transactions, such as commercial trade, tribute, liturgies, or large scale fines. One consequence of this is that it is very difficult to think that a wide proportion of a population participated in the use of coins. Traders, elites or middling elites, even the state itself may have been the principal users, as opposed to the individual citizen or even the metic (resident alien).

If on the other hand small change appeared in quantity close to the beginnings of silver coinage, then we are given the option of thinking of a wider range of potential users from the very beginning. Small change represents what might be described as the lowest common denominator in coinage. Its relatively low value forces us to consider a much wider range of exchange activities, which then opens the door for a much wider proportion of a civic population. When we think of the impact coinage may have had, we can no longer think of a single class of people using coins, but of the possibility that from its earliest stages coinage affected both elites and the lower strata of the citizen body. What the quantitative picture suggests is that there was a certain degree of intensity in the use of these coins and that coinage slipped into these pre-existing forms of exchange with some ease. To me, this intensity suggests a relatively broad spectrum of a population, comparable to what we are familiar with in the late fifth century once we possess literary evidence relating to everyday life.

Why is this important? The importance of this must be appreciated in light of the work done by both von Reden and Kurke. Coinage cannot reveal on its own how basic changes in society were happening, and I agree with von Reden that coinage was probably not in itself responsible for the substantive changes in social relationships apparent during the archaic period. Coinage simply appears much too late for it to take the credit. But what coinage can do is to suggest that there may be areas of exchange outside elite arenas which were being affected by the changes in the ethical framework of commensurability. For both von Reden and Kurke, it is the elites who are central to the question of coinage, either as participants in the civic activities or as the group which found coinage both a threat and an opportunity. Elite culture may provide us with the vast bulk of information on how society was changing, but what we have to remember is that it provides us with a limited picture. I do wonder whether small change, as a form of coinage, should be restricted to these circles or whether their domain included the middling and lower strata of civic society.

This change in focus I think is quite important as it means that when we consider perceptions and attitudes towards gain, we should consider both those whose traditional forms of exchange were being marginalized as well as those who may have profited from the new medium of exchange. Viewing attitudes towards money from privileged sources will no doubt give us the polemic against gain we see. Yet I think we ought to be concerned with the other side of the coin. When we consider the impact coinage and the moneyed economy had on traditional exchange relationships, it offers a glimpse at one of the media

of exchange which those who gained from the new relationships would have used. It is one of the cases where the material evidence of small change may shed light on a period when the literary evidence is relatively silent on the workings of everyday life.

# DEMOS' *PHIALÊ* AND THE RHETORIC OF MONEY IN FOURTH-CENTURY ATHENS<sup>1</sup>

*Sitta von Reden*

In an important essay on the economy in society Niklas Luhmann describes money as the medium which brings about the economy as a recognized, self-referential sub-system of society. The economy as an 'autopoietic' system that produces and reproduces itself receives its self-referentiality from the activity of payment which gives relationships a particular meaning. Money institutionalizes the activity of payment, and as a 'medium of communication' has become an unequivocal signifier. Any relationship in which payments are made become part of the economy, while these relationships are understood by anyone as economic relationships (Luhmann 1989: 13–51).

It is commonly agreed that in the ancient world the economy was neither a recognized social subsystem, nor was money a signifier that held the economy together symbolically.<sup>2</sup> More controversial is the question what this implies for the project of economic history (see Morris, this volume; cf. Dougherty and Kurke 1993a: 1–12, and more generally L. Hunt 1990). While most economic historians tend to believe that problems constituted by economic thought can be studied successfully in historical perspective regardless of whether humans in the past were aware of them and talked about them as we do, some scholars have become more sceptical about the value of such an enterprise.<sup>3</sup> Ian Morris, for example, points out that

In the last twenty years economic historians of other periods and anthropologists have to some extent lost interest in what Finley . . . took to be the central questions. They have turned instead towards agent-centred issues of meaning, treating 'the economic' as a category of representation, a field of negotiations for knowledgeable actors in pursuit of their own goals . . . when ancient authors discuss 'economic' issues they are manipulating evocative symbols within specific performance contexts, constructing images of themselves and others.  
(Morris 1994a: 351–2)



It may be that the interest of historians constitutes itself arbitrarily, or according to fashion, but the declining interest in the conventional domains of economic history may also result from a change of perspective on contemporary life. One may feel, as Ray and Sayers suggest:

that the increasing complexity and speed of contemporary life, the increasing significance of images and symbols, along with the disappearance of familiar institutional markers have generated new configurations of what we used to separate into 'cultural' and 'economic' categories. If this is so, then our received cognitive maps need reorienting in new and perhaps exciting directions.

(Ray and Sayer 1999: 22)

In this paper I would like to give some life to these issues by looking at the representation of credit, money and property in one of the extant speeches in the corpus of the Attic orators. The orators have been an important source for Athenian economic history, in particular in the recent and very different analyses of credit and banking by Millett (1991) and Cohen (1992).<sup>4</sup> Yet it has also been pointed out that law-court speeches do not offer insights into the economic reality of fourth-century Athens, but present us with an 'economic imaginary' (Morris 1994a). We may identify conflicts of values and beliefs, but we may not read away the constructions they put to us and find out how the economy really worked. The reason why Millett and Cohen came to such divergent conclusions about the Athenian economy, despite working from the same sources, was that law-court speeches put a deliberately ambiguous representation of reality on the screen. They were predicated on the possibility of multiple interpretation, and no historical contextualization puts us in the position to get beyond that screen.

It is the deliberate ambiguity of representation and the performative preoccupations of public texts which interest me in this essay and which seem to me to challenge the project of conventional economic history.<sup>5</sup> In particular, I wish to explore the symbolic underpinnings of the accounts of monetary exchange, monetary property and loan transactions in a speech which puts the public invention of Athens' most valuable citizens at its centre. Much important work on the political symbolism of money has been done recently, and it is worth looking at this first before turning to the speech itself.

Edouard Will argued some time ago that in the Greek polis *nomisma*, coinage, had strong associations with fair distribution; it described the relationship between citizens and between citizens and the city. Not accidentally *nomisma* and *nomos*, law, had the same roots: both were the result of rightful distribution, a conventional standard, something used by custom or convention among a political community (E. Will 1954b, 1975). More recently, Lisa Kallet-Marx has suggested that ever since Themistocles persuaded the Athenians to use the silver resources of Laurion to pay with silver coinage for the construction of the fleet, coinage had come to represent in Athens a fundamental condition of

power. The equation of money and power was not just the extension of the traditional link between wealth and power, but a politically significant transformation of that link. As long as warfare had been land warfare with each cavalryman and hoplite equipping himself at his own expense, private wealth had determined and justified military and political status. With the creation of a fleet built and maintained by the public treasury, coinage represented the power of all Athenian people as opposed to individual wealth. Public funds in general, but coinage in particular, were linked to democracy, democratic political identity and the rhetoric of power in the public space (Kallet-Marx 1993, 1994). Leslie Kurke has drawn particular attention to the political conflicts and tensions brought about by the introduction of coinage (Kurke 1995, 1999). Coinage represented a considerable threat to the mythical hierarchy of metals, as espoused in the myth of the races, and to the traditional elites that identified with it. From sixth-century sympotic elegy to the writings of Aristotle one may perceive an elitist aristocratic tradition associating itself with the real value of gold and its mythological tradition which intimated power, sovereignty, religious authority and justice. However, coinage from this perspective figured only in the negative, representing trickery, deceit and debased character. Coinage and its vilification in the texts of the elitist tradition marked a fundamental ideological split between two political positions. On the one hand there were those who deliberately assimilated themselves to the dominant civic values within archaic poleis, forging a middling, polis-oriented tradition, and on the other there were those who espoused the elitist tradition claiming that their authority lay outside these middling communities in an inter-polis aristocracy which had privileged links to the gods, the heroes and the East (Kurke 1999: 19).<sup>6</sup>

The conflict was articulated less sharply in the classical period where even traditionalists like Aristotle and Plato could not conceive of the polis without coinage. But the identification with coinage remained exclusive to the polis-oriented, anti-elitist tradition. The fact that most ancient coinages, including fractional denominations, were made from precious metal had not only pragmatic reasons (i.e. that they could be used beyond polis boundaries), but attached the conventional value of coinage to the intrinsic value of pure silver. At least part of the reason why silver became the preferred metal for Greek civic coinages was its symbolic opposition to the elitist identification with pure gold. Moreover, the conceptual link between *nomisma* and *nomos* remained a generally perceived one. Kurke draws attention to a passage in Demosthenes' speech *Against Timocrates* which is worth quoting in full:

I want [then] to narrate to you that also, which they say Solon once said when he was prosecuting someone who had proposed a bad law. For it is said that he said to the jurors, when he had presented the rest of the prosecution, that the law exists for virtually all cities, if anyone debases the currency, that the penalty is death. And having asked if the law

appeared to them also to be just and good, when the jurors assented, he said that he himself considered silver coinage to have been invented by private individuals for the sake of private exchange, while he considered laws to be the currency of the city (*nomisma tês poleôs*). And indeed it was much more necessary for the jurors to hate and punish any man who debased the currency of the city and introduced counterfeit than if someone did that to the currency of private individuals. And he added as proof that the wrongdoing of the one who debases the laws is much greater than that of the one who debases the silver currency, the fact that many cities though they openly use silver currency mixed with bronze or lead, are safe and suffer no harm from this, but men who use wicked laws or allow the existing laws to be debased have never yet survived.

(Dem. 24.212–14, trans. Kurke)

As Kurke notes, Demosthenes not only establishes a hierarchical analogy between good laws and silver coinage, he also attributes to them an equal kind of value. On the one hand the citizens, or the jurors in this particular instance, had the power to change the value of both of them, which rendered them dependent on the subjective will of the citizen body. On the other hand they were both backed by an absolute essence: pure silver and natural justice which when debased or impaired will do harm to the citizen body. In this sense there was not just a superficial analogy between coinage and laws.<sup>7</sup> The application of the terms 'counterfeit' and 'debasement' to the quality of law was not metaphorical, nor the idea that good laws and pure silver coinage manifested a good citizen body.

The process of testing the purity of coinage and the quality of the application of laws was the uppermost duty of the citizen body. Kurke argues that the *dokimastês*, the official who evaluated and approved coinage, and *dokimasia*, the process by which the nature and obedience to the laws of the archon-elect was examined were also related. *Dokimos*, in contrast to the absolute terms *agathos*, *esthlos* or *aristos*, connoted the approval of an individual by the community of which he was part. Herodotos, who showed a particular interest in culturally varying forms of evaluation and social approval, used the term no less than 37 times. But *dokimos* was also the technical term for approved coinage, legal tender. It occurred in this sense in archaic legal inscriptions and was still explained in these terms by the second-century CE scholar Pollux (Caccamo Caltabiano and Radici Colace 1992: 121–42). The elision of *nomoi/nomisma* and the citizens who used and obeyed them was unsurprising. As Aristotle argued at great length, only those human beings who live in poleis ordered by laws and fair exchange become proper human beings. In Athens the analogy of the value of coinage and of the citizens ruled by *nomoi* was further supported by the fact that silver was a native product of the Attic soil – just as their autochthonous citizens were. Already Aeschylus had his chorus explain the coincidence of

Athenian wealth and the superiority of the Athenians in a language that conjures up fertility and autochthony, 'They have some spring of silver, a treasurehouse of the earth' (Aesch. *Pers.* 238). But Xenophon expounded in even more evocative language why the Athenian land was richer than that of her neighbours:

There is land that has silver beneath it, clearly by divine allotment: for, though many cities are their neighbours, both by land and by sea, not even a single small vein of silver ore goes through into any of them.

(Xen. *Poroi* 1.5)

Just as the Athenians were the only people among their neighbours who were autochthonous, so their silver resources made them wealthier than the others. The silver coinage offered itself as a model and provided the language for thinking the collective citizen body; once it was established as practice, its ongoing production and circulation not only reflected, but in some sense constituted the community of citizens (Kurke 1999: 301–27).<sup>8</sup> Thus, Kurke concludes, pure silver coinage helped to constitute the imaginary community of citizens who use it. In opposition to bronze token coinage, it asserted that civic order was more than just conventional. In contrast to gold, it rejected the elitist hierarchy of essence within the citizen body, while it imposed a firm boundary between the human, civic community and the domain of the gods. Its stamp, finally, implied that all citizens took shape from, and submitted to, the civic authority that formed them (Kurke 1999: 309 with Anderson 1991: 12).

Lysias' speech (19) *On the Property of Aristophanes* is a powerful example of how the civic identification with coinage and monetary circulation was deployed, as well as manipulated and undermined, in the rhetoric of the Athenian law courts (Todd 2000: 200–19). In particular, it shows how civic personae could be construed in terms of money and how in monetary representation they could be symbolically included or excluded from the citizen body and its dominant values. Yet the speech also gambles with the anxieties attached to money, its potential to render wealth invisible and to deceive the public, leaving the *demos* out of control.<sup>9</sup> The speaker, for reasons that we shall see in a moment, on the one hand confirms the civic identification with coinage but on the other unsettles this identification by demonstrating how monetary property is deceptive, rumours about it misleading, and thus it deprives the citizens of their most powerful form of participation.

The brother-in-law of a certain Aristophanes had to defend himself on behalf of his deceased father against the charge of withholding confiscated property from the Athenian treasury. Aristophanes and his father Nikophemos had organized an expedition against the Persian king on behalf of king Euagoras of Salamis, but this expedition seems to have brought them into discredit with the Athenians.<sup>10</sup> Aristophanes and his father were executed on the spot and their property confiscated. When the property was collected by the state, much

less was found than expected. Since Aristophanes' brother-in-law was the only surviving heir, he now had to defend himself against the charge of withholding part of the confiscated property from the state.<sup>11</sup> The case takes us into the highest ranks of Athenian society (all people involved and talked about had acted at some time or other as trierarchs in Athens) and into a complex set of civic relationships and alliances. Nikophemos, citizen of Athens but resident in Cyprus, was a friend of Konon, one time Athenian general, who had stayed as an exile in Cyprus from 405 until 393 BCE. Aristophanes, his son and resident in Athens, was a close friend of Euagoras, king of Salamis on Cyprus, who was a naturalized Athenian and a great hellenizer at the much-contested border between Greece and the Persian Empire (Davies 1971: 201–2). When hostilities began between Euagoras and Artaxerxes II, the Athenians sent ten warships to help Euagoras. However, the affair was a contentious matter, as it appears from Xenophon, since the Athenians had long enjoyed Persian friendship and won the victory at Knidos over the Spartans three years before only with the help of a Persian-sponsored fleet (Xen. *Hell.* 4. 8.24). Konon himself had commanded that fleet and been on a friendly visit to Artaxerxes who had showered him with gifts and offered him as much money as he might spend (Diod. Sic. 14.81.6). However the issue was negotiated among the Athenians, those who had ordered Aristophanes' execution, and now searched for the confiscated property, had not been in favour of the expedition.

In his defence, the speaker demonstrates how much Aristophanes had spent on public services and how little of his property was therefore left. In addition, he constructs an opposition between his father, the typical example of a quiet citizen who had inherited his wealth and who had stayed away from politics; and Aristophanes, a rather adventurous *nouveau riche*, a *philotimos*, who had been in the centre of public affairs.<sup>12</sup> Both civic stereotypes had their respective equivalent in monetary behaviour. The speaker's father had married a wife without a marriage portion, but in turn had given his daughters to husbands who were honourable but in need of a substantial dowry. In addition he joined privately in dowering the daughters and sisters of needy citizens, and there were people whom he ransomed, and others for whom he paid funeral expenses. 'He did this in the belief that an honourable man should help his friends, even if nobody would know about it' (Lys. 19.59). Aristophanes had spent all his money in pursuit of honour and glory, in contrast to the speaker's father, and 'their age was very different and their character even more so' (Lys. 19.18). Not only did Aristophanes go to Syracuse to persuade Dionysios to an alliance with Euagoras and Athens, but when the Athenians had sent the warships in support of Euagoras he supplied the arms, light infantry, and the maintenance of the ships partly with his own money, and partly with money that he had borrowed from his friends. In brief, he was the kind of person who, short of squandering his property on drink and prostitutes, lavished his money on a foreign ruler to enhance his own position. 'Do you think that this man', the speaker asks, 'who was eager for honour (*philotimos*) . . . would have left behind any of his property?

Do you not think that he would have supplied everything he possibly could to gratify Euagoras and procure a larger return?’ (Lys. 19.23).

At the climax of this opposition between the quiet citizen and the *philotimos*, the speaker gives the details of a rather peculiar loan transaction, which in the end did not take place, but which for some reason the speaker found worth mentioning at length:

So it is easy to tell from what has been said that when such crises occurred, he would not have spared any of his property. The strongest proof of that is as follows. Demos, son of Pylilampes, was about to go to Cyprus as trierarch and asked me to see Aristophanes. Demos said that he had received a gold cup (*phialên chrusên*) as a pledge (*sumbolon*) from the Great King, and that he would give it to Aristophanes as security for a loan of sixteen minas, so that he would be able to pay for the trierarchy. He explained that Aristophanes would be in a position to redeem it for twenty minas when he arrived at Cyprus, since that pledge would enable him to obtain cash (*chrêmata*) and many other benefits (*agathôn*) throughout the mainland. Aristophanes listened to Demos’ proposal and my request, and although he was to take the gold cup (*chrusion*) and receive four minas as interest, he replied that it was not possible, and swore that he also had had to borrow from elsewhere for the mercenaries: otherwise he would have been the first person to accept this pledge (*sumbolon*) and satisfy our request (*charisasthai*).

(Lys. 19.24–6)

Demos had been made to equip a warship for Cyprus at his own expense, but lacking the necessary funds, or not having them in the right place, he had asked Aristophanes for a loan of 16 minae. The speaker acted as a mediator, which incidentally shows his involvement in the transaction as well as his connections with Demos. Aristophanes, though usually resident in Athens, was in Cyprus at the time, and as a security for the loan and as a token of trust, Demos had offered to transfer to Cyprus a gold cup (*phialê*) which he had received from the Persian king as a token of friendship. As soon as he himself arrived in Cyprus, he would redeem the cup with a payment of 20 minae which he would easily procure since the gift of the king furnished him throughout the Persian empire with goods and money. Aristophanes, however, had turned down the request. Yet the speaker makes it clear that this was neither out of lack of concern for Demos’ needs, who after all was equipping an Athenian warship, nor out of lack of friendship. For not only had the security been safe and the interest promising, but he had felt the desire to do a favour to Demos and his own brother-in-law. That he did not do so after all was a clear indication that Aristophanes had no cash.

It is the cup that must catch our attention. First of all, to pledge valuable items rather than land or houses for a loan was not unusual. But in the case of

Demos it is nonetheless surprising. Paul Millett (1991: 77) has observed that a person who possessed no land and was generally less well-off could offer as security for a loan pledges (*enechura*) in the form of movable property. We know of jewellery (Dem. 41.11), a mass of copper (Dem. 49. 50–2) or a gold crown (Dem. 53.2).<sup>13</sup> Demos, however, is unlikely to have been landless, and the fact that his family belonged for generations to the liturgy-paying class makes it inconceivable that he was one of those who had to work for a living. Another reason for pledging the cup, rather than the composition or size of his estate, could have been that Demos did not really need a loan but wished to move money to Cyprus without actually shipping cash over the sea. Since cheques, bills of exchange or other orders of payment over a distance were unknown in classical Athens, a pledge would have been the only alternative to delivering hard cash. While this might be an explanation for the loan, it does not explain why the speaker puts so much emphasis on the nature of the pledge. For the cup is not just a valuable item but an object which, according to the speaker, procured credit, a 'credit card' of some sort.

The speaker is surprisingly vague about the role of the cup within the loan between Aristophanes and Demos. *To symbolon*, as he calls it, can mean anything from 'security' or 'pledge' to 'token', 'credential', 'guarantee' or 'contract'. And indeed the cup does cut across the distinctions between any of these, for it was a valuable object that could function as security or pledge, but in addition was an unwritten contract, a token whose value lay in the obligations it created. It was a gift from the Persian king and worked within the network of his subjects as a token of credit. Moreover, as a token issued by the authority of the king and acceptable as a medium of exchange, it was similar to coined money, but in its personalized, indeterminate value it was quite the opposite of it, and indeed of a commodity too.

Michael Vickers (1984: 49) in a discussion of this passage notes that, if the proposed transaction had been an ordinary business deal, involving loan and security, one would expect the value of the cup to be related to the sum to be repaid. He thus calculates that the cup could indeed have had the same value as the loan plus interest: 20 minas were equivalent to 1 Persian gold daric and many extant gold and silver objects could be related in weight to coin denominations.<sup>14</sup> If we assume that the Persian cup was worth 100 gold darics, the fact that Demos offered 20 minas in return for the loan of 16 (which, to mention it in passing, involves an unusually high interest rate in such a low-risk loan),<sup>15</sup> might simply have been because this was the value of the cup. So, was the proposed loan between Demos and Aristophanes a clearly calculated deal based on the monetary value of the cup? If this was the case, why does the speaker put so much stress on the cup's token value rather than its precious metal value?

The speaker is conspicuously silent about the material value of the cup. Since this value is left unclear, it is also left unclear whether the loan should be regarded as an agreement between friends or an impersonal exchange based on



calculation and self-interest. If we look at the amount of interest, we can assume that the relationship between the two partners was not all that close. Four minas on a principal of sixteen (25 per cent per annum) is an unusually high rate for a low risk loan, and it is exorbitant if the loan was taken for less than a year (see n.15). Millett (1991: 98–108) has argued that in line with the Athenian ideology of friendly, preferably interest-free loans, interest rates increased proportionately to the social distance between lender and borrower. To judge from the interest, there was not much regular cooperation between Aristophanes and Demos. Yet the speaker emphasises the token value of the cup which brings questions of trust and friendship into focus. Nobody, the speaker asserts, would have been more delighted than Aristophanes to take the token (*to sumbolon*) and do a favour (*charisasthai*) to Demos. The speaker seems fully in control of his rhetorical manoeuvring. Not accidentally, he contrasts the two meanings of the pledge, calling it gold cup (*phialên chrusên/chrusion*) when referring to its value as a security (Lys. 19.25), but a *sumbolon* when he wishes to bring the civic friendship between the two partners into focus (Lys. 19.26).

The gold cup was in fact a token which served to prove the ritualized guest-friendship between Demos and the Persian king, and entitled Demos to privileges and support within the king's empire.<sup>16</sup> But Demos was willing to transfer it to a third person for whom it had nothing but exchange value. Moreover, it cannot have escaped the notice of the audience that Demos was promising the money from the Persian network of guest friends precisely at a moment when Athens was at war with Persia. Could he have expected to claim the benefits of friendship at that time, and would it have been safe for him to travel to Persian territory? Could he have expected, furthermore, that Aristophanes would have handed back the security before the loan was repaid, so that he could take it as proof of his credentials?<sup>17</sup> Given that the practicalities of the return of the loan are not at all clear, it is likely that the token value of the security was played up by the speaker, because it provided him with good material for a rhetorical display. Not only did it construct Demos in a certain way, but it also referred to another exchange context outside Athens, different from it, and beyond the reach of its coinage.

Aristophanes and Nikophemos had been involved in a controversial campaign which in the eyes of those who had promoted their execution had been considered as treacherous. Demos, by contrast, had sided with the Persian king throughout, as his gift of friendship, and the claim that he would receive money from any Persian subject, indicated. His father Pyrilampes had acted as ambassador to the Persian king several times, which was even publicly remembered by a collection of peafowl, also gifts of the Persian king, that Pyrilampes is said to have put on show as a public spectacle in Athens for over 30 years (Davies 1971: 329–30, with Pl. *Chrm.* 158a; Lys. fr. 57 [Blass]). Arguably, the cup had also been a gift to his father rather than to Demos himself but, like the peafowl, passed to him on his father's death.<sup>18</sup> The *phialê* was therefore a symbol of an alliance much closer to the heart of the Athenians at



the time of the speech than that of Aristophanes and Nikophemos. Only as a regular duty, or without knowing what he was doing, did Demos equip a warship for the Athenian campaign against Persia (Bivar 1999: 381). On the other hand, the *phialê* which functioned as a token among the Persian king's friends and subjects is not just a sign of friendship, as Pyrilampes' peafowl were, but revealed Demos' access to a foreign exchange network, exclusive to the friends of the Persian king and symbolized by a golden drinking cup. The anxieties attached to the hidden bonds created by barbarian *dorodokia* among private individuals were deep-seated among the Athenians and in this case, with its allusion to gold, the symposium and the riches of the East, might even have conjured up social resentment in the democratic register.<sup>19</sup>

There seems to be a subtle rhetorical shift in the second half of the speech where the speaker increasingly distances himself from his ties with Aristophanes and Nikophemos and constructs himself and his family as fundamentally different citizens. The shift had been hinted at earlier in the speech (Lys. 19.18) when the speaker had referred to the very different personalities of Aristophanes, eager for honour (*philotimos*) on the one hand, and his father, minding his own business (*apragmôn*), on the other. Towards the end of the speech he reinforces that contrast, aligning himself with his father, claiming that 'I have never in any way spoken against my father' and 'never until this misfortune occurred was I seen either in court or in the Council chamber' (Lys. 19.55). As we saw above, the difference was not just one of lifestyle, but one of class, tradition, wealth and spending. Given that Athens was in a severe financial crisis at the time of the speech (cf. Lys. 19. 11), not only the case itself, but the opposition between rich and poor, individual and collective, and their willingness to contribute to the city were a delicate matter. It is not atypical in Athenian oratory for the speaker to conceal his social and economic standing. But, it is less typical for a speaker, as here, to conjure up a world of aristocratic custom, breeding and education which might be less favourably received by a democratic audience.<sup>20</sup> In the final paragraph of the speech, however, he skilfully associates his father's hippic victories symbolically with the payment of liturgies to the city:<sup>21</sup>

Consider how much is shown to have been spent on the city in the past. At the moment, too, I am paying as trierarch out of what is left, and my father was serving as trierarch when he died. In the future I shall attempt little by little to set aside small amounts for the common good, just as I saw him doing, with the effect that our property has for a long time belonged in reality to the city. . . . Moreover, you should bear in mind my father's character. In every instance that he wanted to spend money beyond what was necessary, clearly these were things from which the city also would gain honour. For instance, when he took up horse breeding, he produced horses that were not simply handsome, but champions, who won victories at the Isthmus and at

Nemea. As a result the city was named in the proclamation and he himself won the wreath.

(Lys. 19. 62–3).

This is archaic rhetoric as it appears abundantly in Pindar and other extant victory odes. Then, it was a way of re-integrating the heroic victor into the human world of the polis (Kurke 1991, 1993). And while it may have convinced the audience that the speaker's family did not seek honour and prestige outside and beyond the city, one must still wonder why the speaker believed he would be able to capitalize on a kind of self-representation that conjured up social distance. The confrontation between him and the jury can easily be envisaged in terms of Ober's model of mass/elite interaction typical for the practice of Athenian democracy. Yet in this model, the hierarchical opposition between elite speakers and mass audiences was also controlled through rhetoric. One of the main aims of public speakers was, according to Ober, to convey that it was the people who held power in Athens especially by their ability to judge and to vote (Ober 1989: 104–55). In this speech the speaker does not conceal his own background, but also undermines the rhetoric of mass participation by demonstrating how little the people were in a position to judge. After having shown that Aristophanes had spent all his money before he died, he argues that the Athenians were frequently deceived by the rumours about the wealth of their richest fellow citizens. Tactfully, he puts it in terms of stories that he himself had only heard from his father:

I have heard from my father, and from other older men, that not just now but also previously you have been much mistaken about property: people who during their lifetimes were thought rich, but when they died were shown to be very different from your expectations. For example, everybody (as I hear) thought during his lifetime that Ischomachus had seventy talents, but after his death his two sons did not share even ten talents each. Stephanus son of Thallus was said to have more than fifty talents, but after his death his property was found to be about eleven talents. The household of Nicias was expected to be worth no less than a hundred talents, with most of this being kept at home; but Niceratus, when he was dying, said that he had no silver and gold to leave, and the property he left to his son is worth no more than fourteen talents. Callias son of Hipponicus, soon after his father's death, was thought to have owned the most of any Greek. People say that his grandfather valued his own property at two hundred talents. But Callias' present tax assessment (*timêma*) is not even two talents. You all know how Cleophon controlled all the affairs of the city for many years and was expected to make a large amount from his official position. But when he died, this property could not be found anywhere; even his relatives by blood and by marriage, in whose hands he would have left

it, are acknowledged to be poor men (*penetes*). Clearly we have been greatly deceived both about those whose wealth is inherited and about those who have recently come into prominence.

(Lys. 19.45–9)

The passage draws attention to the perceived danger of the *demos*' falling prey to lies and deception but, more significantly, it does so by representing the wealth of Athens' richest citizens in terms of their *timêma* (rateable property) which was the basis of the assessment of public duties.<sup>22</sup> On the one hand this representation immediately calls to mind that the property of individuals was also that of the citizen body, but on the other it presents property as a function of mere numbers of talents. Houses, land and victories could be seen and judged reliably by everyone, whereas money vanished, and numbers could be manipulated, especially when they became part of rumour and slander.<sup>23</sup> Virginia Hunter has shown how gossip in Athens worked effectively as a means of social control. Gossip took place everywhere in public and private, but in the law courts the 'politics of reputation' developed into a potent tool of public control and self-regulation of the citizen body (Hunter 1994; Ober 1989: 148 ff.). Hunter is particularly interested in the construction of bad reputations as part of the forensic process; in our speech, by contrast, the value of rumour itself becomes part of the argument. Implicitly, the speaker blames his prosecutors for spreading false rumour about his family fortunes but, not mentioning his own prosecution at this moment at all, his point becomes a more general one about the elusiveness of invisible wealth and the capacity of money to misconstrue people in the public gaze. Democracy, moreover, relied on, and symbolically identified itself with, numerical representation, as it was put into practice in the counting of votes, the public documentation of expenditure and the estimation of property.<sup>24</sup> Within the same argument the speaker unsettles simultaneously the Athenians' reliance on rumour, on numbers and on the monetary representation of wealth.<sup>25</sup>

It is against this background that the exchange between Aristophanes and Demos can be understood as a powerful rhetoric. Aristophanes had been represented as a *philotimos* who had gained his money only recently, had to purchase land and house by himself, and had spent his fortune lavishly in the service of his political ambitions. While this was by no means a disreputable civic career, the speaker chooses to set it off against the political culture of the traditional elite like his father, himself and Demos, for which the gold cup was symbolic as much as the sporting victories of his father and his own marriage. This was not a world without money, but a world where the symbolic identification with coinage was less pronounced and which was therefore less prone to deceptive representation and change.<sup>26</sup> The speaker does not fail to mention that the Athenians were experiencing a time of financial crisis, which (if we follow Kurke) was also a crisis of identity. In this political atmosphere, a defence based on the elitist contrast between the interlocking opposites of

collective convention and pure essence, money and gold, as well as deception and honesty in the fashioning of characters, may have been thought to be successful.

Economic historians might be interested in how precisely the loan transaction between Aristophanes and Demos will have worked, and how to explain its high interest rate. Relevant information might also be sought in the size of individual properties given, and in the objectives to which the Athenian elite applied their wealth. Some might wish to argue with this speech that the urban economy of Athens was highly monetized, or that it was not, and that strategies were found to organize transfers of money across the Mediterranean. Many economic historians would not even consider the narrative of the speech but concentrate on the 'data' it offers. Such investigations become problematic if the ideological origin of our data is considered. The question is not so much whether the information we receive is believable or not, likely to be true, accurate or not, but for what reason it was given, selected, and (re)presented the way it is. As the ancient economy was not a self-referential subsystem of society offering a frame of reference within which information was evaluated, the answer to whether something was believable, true or accurate is likely to have been different then and now.

#### NOTES

- 1 Thanks to Vincent Gabrielsen with whom I first discussed Demos' *phialê*. I am also grateful to the audiences at the KERDOS conference, at the Exeter conference on Money in 1999 and the Cambridge Ancient History Seminar in Lent 2000 for helpful comments and suggestions.
- 2 Finley put it quite clearly in the introduction to *The Ancient Economy* (1999a: 21) 'Of course, they farmed, traded, manufactured, mined, taxed, coined, deposited and loaned money, made profits or failed in their enterprises . . . What they did not do, however, was to combine these particular activities conceptually into a unit, in Parsonian terms into a "differentiated sub-system of society".' Remarks on money go in the same direction (cf. Finley 1999a: 21, 26, 115–16, 132–5), and although Finley underestimated the degree of monetization, and monetary sophistication, of the ancient Mediterranean, even the fiercest modernists do not argue for a symbolic link between money and the economy as Luhmann does for the modern world. See for an overview of recent literature von Reden (forthcoming).
- 3 For the various strands in current ancient economic history see Cartledge 1998 and Davies 1998.
- 4 Millett 1991 adopts a distinctly Finleyan approach to lending and borrowing, showing how Athenian, mostly small-scale, credit operations were ideologically embedded in civic structure. In contrast, Cohen 1992, taking the market process to be the frame for ancient credit and banking, attempts to demonstrate that the Athenian commercial economy in the fourth century received an important stimulus through maritime trade and institutionalized finance. See Morris 1994a; von Reden (forthcoming).
- 5 The representational practices of the Attic orators, as well as their performative preoccupations, have been particularly well researched recently, mainly due to the compelling study by Ober 1989. This does not mean, however, that the problems Morris and others have identified are exclusive to public oratory. Kurke 1991,

- 1999 has presented abundant evidence that other Greek texts also employ 'economic' signifiers quite differently from the way we tend to receive them. For public inscriptions as a space for performance see Osborne 1999, and, further afield, Davis 1987 for 'documentary material' as fiction.
- 6 The distinction between elitist and middling traditions in archaic poleis has been developed by Morris 1996; see also Kurke 1992 for an interdependence of political alignment and genre.
  - 7 The link has also been explored, in rather different contexts, by Seaford 1994 and von Reden 1997.
  - 8 Kurke rightly draws attention to further possibilities of exploring coinage as a literary trope and cultural practice; for which see F. Will 1960; Steiner 1994: 105–6; Wohl 1998: 59–99; Seaford 1998.
  - 9 For the anxieties attached to money in its power to render wealth invisible, see Gernet 1981; Gabrielsen 1986; Kurke 1991: 225–39.
  - 10 The speech is dated to c. 387 BCE, two years after Athenian aid to Euagoras of Cyprus against Persia (390/89 BCE); Gernet and Bizos 1955: 38; and Vickers 1984: 51, n.1 for further bibliography. All passages quoted use the translation of Todd 2000.
  - 11 It has rightly been pointed out that the speaker does not question the validity of the confiscation itself and the severity of the punishment inflicted on his brother-in-law, but only defends himself against the charge of withholding confiscated property. It is possible that this defence was the second in a series, for it appears from Harpocration (*s.v. chutroi*) that Lysias had written a speech against the proposer of the confiscation itself (Davies 1971: 202). If this is the case, it becomes more comprehensible why the speaker establishes an image of himself that works partly in positive contrast to that of his brother-in-law. See further below.
  - 12 Carter (1986) in his outline of the *philotimos/apragmôn* contrast draws heavily on the material of this speech; he also notes significant parallels between this speech and Plato's *Charmides*, which invites speculations about the ideological origins of this contrast. Plato must have been known to the speaker, given that he was a friend of Demos whose father was the second husband of Plato's mother (Bivar 1999). Moreover, Pyrilampes gets a mention in the *Charmides* (158a), while Charmides, participant in several Platonic dialogues, was the son of Pyrilampes' sister Glaukon (Davies 1971: 330).
  - 13 Significantly, Millett discusses these cases in relation to lending and borrowing among poorer citizens, who had to work for a living (*penetes*).
  - 14 For the gold:silver ratio see Lewis 1968: 131–2, (20 minae/2000 drachmae = 100 darics; with 1 gold daric weighing 8.24–8.46 gr.); cf. Xen. *An.* 1.7.18, 5.6 (3000 darics = 10 talents). For gold and silver objects usually being rendered in units of commonly used coins, see von Bothmer 1962–3; Cahn 1960; Strong 1966; Vickers 1984.
  - 15 Millett 1991: 104–5, 25 per cent interest/year is attested only for high risk maritime loans; cf. Dem. 35.10 (22.5 per cent and 30 per cent). Millett suggests that 12 per cent is likely to have been the 'normal' or 'reasonable' rate appropriate for an *impersonal* loan.
  - 16 Herman 1987: 65–7 discussing this passage refers (a) to extant ivory *sumbola* recording alliances between guest friends, but which might not have served as tokens like the Persian cup; (b) to literary evidence on ritualized guest friendship ties where the advantages of this institution could be enjoyed even if these ties were only indirect (cf. Eur. *Med.* 613–14; Pl. *Cri.* 45b–c; Dem. 50.18 and 56); and (c) to extant ceramic vases bearing Xerxes' or Artaxerxes' name in Old

- Persian, Elamite, Akkadian and Egyptian hieroglyphs; cf. Kent 1953: 115. The combination of this evidence might suggest that there were indeed *sumbola* in the form of (precious metal) vessels that entitled the bearer to the benefits of guest-friendship within a whole network of *xenoi*. Yet none of the extant examples can be taken as direct parallels to the one in Lys. 19.25–6.
- 17 Herman 1987: 65 notes this problem: how could Demos use the *symbolon* as a device for raising money as long as it was in Aristophanes' possession? Herman does not find an answer to this and suspects some trick implied by the speaker.
  - 18 According to Athenaeus (9.397) the peafowl were bequeathed to Demos on Pylilampes' death, but it is controversial whether the cup was also inherited (Cartledge 1990). Commentators on Pl. *Chrm.* 158 a and Ar. *Vesp.* 98 have taken different lines. See Bivar 1999 with MacDowell 1971 and Platthy 1990: 26. Hofstetter 1978, Vickers 1984 and Bivar 1999 assume that the cup was received by Demos himself. The question is relevant only because, following Bivar, Vickers and Hofstetter, we must assume stronger relationships between Demos and Persia than if we do not.
  - 19 For the practice of, and the problems arising from, barbarian *dorodokia*, see Herman 1987; Lewis 1989; and von Reden 1995: 93 ff.. For social resentments see Kurke 1999, and above.
  - 20 Ober (1989): 192 ff. and 287 ff. for aristocratic *idiôtai* normally being hesitant to play upon their backgrounds.
  - 21 The reference to sporting victories enhances the image of 'minding one's own business' and staying out of politics (*apragmosune*). As Carter notes, games are not normally a metaphor for politics, but rather a refuge from it. They stand for a political world, different from the democratic one, for which custom, breeding and education prepare. See Carter 1986: 59–60 with Xen. *Mem.* 3.7, and Pl. *Chrm. passim*.
  - 22 The extent and function of deception in Athenian rhetoric and practice are explored in depth in the comprehensive study by Jon Hesk (2000). See also Ober 1989: 165–74.
  - 23 That false rumours of wealth were especially the result of slander becomes clear in the subsequent passage where the speaker suggests that people's fortunes were publicly inflated above all through slander about their conduct in office (Lys. 19.49).
  - 24 I have argued in more detail for the interplay of money, weighing, numerical representation and democracy in von Reden 1995: 105 ff.
  - 25 The speech is in fact riddled with figures assessing the size of fortunes, relative expenditure, the amounts of dowries, liturgies and other payments, costs of houses and land bought by Aristophanes, loans granted, etc. The argument of the speech would have been possible without these calculations, and they do not present any proof that no money was left, but they provide the backdrop for the speaker's most important point about the deceptiveness of the practice of calculation.
  - 26 Seaford 1998 gives abundant evidence for the identification of money with change and changeability in Athenian tragedy.

# WORKSHOP, MARKETPLACE AND HOUSEHOLD

The nature of technical specialization in  
classical Athens and its influence on  
economy and society

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## I

Standard textbooks on economics define their subject as the study of the organization of production and the exchange of goods and services. Recent work on the ancient Greek economy has however tended to concentrate exclusively on exchange. For instance, Paul Millett's *Lending and Borrowing* examines the role of lending, Edward Cohen's *Athenian Economy and Society: A Banking Perspective* looks primarily at credit, maritime loans, and banking, Alain Bresson's *La cité marchande* focuses mostly on trade between poleis and Sitta von Reden's book, as the title indicates, studies only *Exchange in Ancient Greece*. And Morris (1994a) in his rather selective 'survey' of recent work has nothing to say about production.<sup>1</sup> This emphasis on credit and exchange has left us with an incomplete view of the economy by neglecting the organization of production and its influence on the nature of the economy. There have been several good studies of agriculture and food-production – one thinks of the fine works of Hanson (1995) and Amouretti (1986) – but there has been less work on the non-agricultural sector. Another trend in recent work is the tendency to analyse different modes of exchange solely in relation to social and political factors. Millett attempts to explain lending in terms of the ethic of reciprocity implicit in *philia* (friendship), and von Reden analyses exchange in relation to the development of the polis. This approach was inspired by the work of Hasebroek and Finley, who stressed the importance of social and political factors in the allocation of resources in the ancient world.

The aim of this essay is to make a start in correcting the imbalance in recent scholarship by looking at the organization of production and its influence on the nature of exchange in the Athenian economy. To be specific, I will examine



the nature of technical specialization and its relationship to the rise of market exchange and the management of the *oikos*. The division of labour and its role in social development were important topics for several thinkers such as Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim, but have been almost completely ignored by scholars writing about the ancient Greek economy. In the first part, I will present a list of the evidence for the roughly 170 different occupations in Athens and discuss some of the problems encountered when analysing this evidence. The second and third parts will discuss some of the implications the type of specialization has for our understanding of the Athenian economy.

Over the past several years I have been collecting the evidence for all the occupations attested in our sources for classical Athens (500–250 BCE). I began my collection in a haphazard fashion, not expecting to find more than three or four dozen occupations, but to my surprise the list has grown to about 170. I have recently begun to make a systematic search through all the contemporary sources, a project that will take several years (and a few more grants) to complete. The final version of my study will not only list all different occupations, but divide them by economic sector and classify all craftsmen by status and gender as well as examine the range of customers who bought their goods and services. At the end of my essay the reader will find a list of occupations I have compiled so far. Although my search is not complete, I believe that I have collected enough evidence to make it possible to discern some general patterns and to outline some tentative conclusions.

Since my main concern is the impact of specialization on the economy, I have listed only those occupations that produced goods and services to be exchanged for cash in the agora or elsewhere than the Athenian marketplace. I have accordingly not included public officials, religious officials, and military officers. Many of these officials purchased goods and services for the polis, for sanctuaries, or for the army and navy. Those officials who received a salary also used this money to purchase items for their private households. But none of them played a role in producing the goods and services traded in the marketplace and elsewhere in Attica.

Before analysing the evidence, a few words of caution are in order. Above all, we must guard against committing the nominalist fallacy when counting occupations, that is, the mistake of assuming that each name must refer to a separate and distinct occupation. For instance, we find two terms for those who cook food, *mageiros* and *opsopoios*. One might think these words refer to two different types of occupations, but two fragments of the comic poet Alexis (fr. 115 K-A [= Athen. 3.107a]; fr. 153.6–14 [= Athen. 9.379a]) indicate that the two terms are virtually synonymous. The list also contains two terms for sculptor, the *agalmatopoios* and the *andriantopoios*. We know that the Greeks maintained a strict distinction between an *agalma*, a statue of a god, and an *andrias*, a statue of a mortal (Lewis and Stroud 1979). But it is unlikely that those who made statues of gods possessed a different set of skills from those who



made statues of men; the two terms are more likely to be alternative ways of referring to the same occupation. The terms *artopoios* and *artokopos*, both of which the Greek Lexicon of Liddell and Scott translates as 'baker', are obviously synonyms, and *mulothros* (miller) may also be a synonym of *sitopoios* ('grain processor', see Thuc. 6.22; but cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 51.3, where *mulothrois* are millers and different from bread sellers). The same can be said for the pairs *hupogrammateus/hyperetes* (assistant to an architect), *misthotos/huporgos* (hired labourer), and *erioplokos/erithos* (wool-weaver) and for the trio of terms *lithekopos/litbologos/litbourgos* (stone-workers). And can we make a distinction between a *hetaira* ('courtesan') and a *porne* (prostitute) (Davidson 1997: 109–36)? Did each possess a separate and distinct set of skills?

By the same token, we must not count general terms as an additional occupation, when they cover several more specific terms. We frequently find on the one hand the words *kapelos* and *kapelis* ('retailer') and on the other many compounds formed with the suffix *-poles* ('-seller'). *Kapelos* and *kapelis* do not refer to a separate occupation, but are clearly general terms that embrace all the various types of sellers referred to by the compounds formed from *-poles*. The same is true for the term *didaskalos* (teacher); this is not a separate occupation but a general term that encompasses the more specific terms *grammatistes*, (teacher of reading), *kitharistes* (music teacher), and *paidotribes* (athletic coach).

Even if we deduct these various synonyms and general terms, the total number of occupations is still around 170, an impressive amount. What is perhaps most striking about the list is the number of occupations in the non-agricultural sector. Of the roughly 170 occupations relatively few are in agriculture and animal husbandry. Striking also is the number of occupations involved in selling agricultural products. Some of these may be farmers who have come to the agora to sell their excess crops or who maintain a shop to sell what they grow. For instance, one *horos* (no. 92A) indicates that it was set up on a property that included a house, a shop and a garden.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that the owner grew produce in his garden and sold it in the shop. But this was probably an unusual arrangement; most farmers lived far from Athens or other markets. Plato (*Resp.* 371 c–d) states that *kapeloi* remained in the agora every day and that most farmers were content to sell to them instead of remaining in the agora and away from their fields.

One might nevertheless argue that the farmers (*georgoi*) were far more numerous than all the other occupations combined. There is no question that they formed the largest occupation, but the list should warn us against underestimating the size of the non-agricultural sector. Banking was obviously not one of the larger occupations, yet our sources for the fourth century give us the name of twenty-five individual bankers in Athens over about two generations (Bogaert 1968: 429–30). We have no idea what percentage this sample represents, but it is unlikely to be as much as half or even a quarter of the total. Naval records indicate that every Athenian trireme employed one *naupegos* (*IG* I<sup>3</sup> 1032.164–5): this points to a total of over 300 *naupagoi*, (shipbuilders), in the

fourth century when the number of triremes rose above that number.<sup>3</sup> As for mining, Lauffer (1956: II 904–12) estimates the number of slaves working in the Laurion region in the fourth century at 10,000. And since metics could not own land, they tended to work in the non-agricultural sector (see *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 10, 1553–78).<sup>4</sup> If Hansen (1991: 92–3) is correct that the number of male metics was about 20,000 in the fourth century, this would mean that the number of metics working in crafts was in the range of 19–20,000. Finally we should not underestimate the number of Athenian citizens working in crafts. Most of the 5,000 who did not own land in 403 (Lys. 34) must have worked as craftsmen or salesmen if they could not find farm land to rent. The building accounts of the Erechtheion records show numerous citizens working alongside slaves and metics as craftsmen. Out of workers on the Erechtheion whose status is known, there were 24 citizens, 42 metics, and 20 slaves (Randall 1953). If we can generalize from these figures and accept a figure of 19,000 metics working as craftsmen, we could put the number of citizens in the non-agricultural sector at around 10,000. It should thus come as no surprise that Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.7.6; cf. *Pl. Prt.* 319d) claimed the Assembly was filled with fullers, leather-workers, joiners, smiths, farmers, and merchants. The citizens who did not work as farmers may have comprised as much as 50 per cent of all adult males (citizens, metics, and slaves).

On the other hand it is crucial to make a distinction between two types of specialization, horizontal and vertical. Horizontal specialization is created by the diversity of goods and services produced by a given level of technology. Since different economic sectors require different sets of skills or work-roles, the greater the number of different goods and services produced, the greater the need for an increased number of specialized skills and work-roles. For instance, in the modern economy, automobile production requires one set of skills, and chemical manufacturing another. And within any one of these sectors, take the chemical industry, one product, for example, plastics, will require a different set of skills from another product, for example, lubricants. Needless to say, there is often some overlap between any two sectors – engineering skills are necessary in many areas, such as automobiles, mining, and building – but each sector will require some specific knowledge for the application of these skills. In the ancient economy, there were cobblers to make shoes, weavers to make clothes, doctors to provide medical services, and so on.

Vertical specialization refers to the number of skills or work-roles required to produce a single product or line of products. In the modern economy, a vast number of skills is needed to produce an automobile, let alone a jet aeroplane or a space-station. Each part of the car – engine, steering, brakes, frame, tyres, and transmission – is the product of collaboration by several different specialists and the labour of many workers, everyone performing a specific function in the manufacture of these parts. To keep the entire process moving smoothly, there is also a need for specialized management roles, which direct and coordinate the work of specialists and are organized into a hierarchical bureaucracy. Though

recently there has been much talk about 'flattened organizational structures', often accompanied by massive lay-offs of middle managers, the basic principle still holds.

The distinction I make here is close to the one made by M. Weber (1947: 225) between 'specification of function' and 'specialization of function'. In specification of function, 'the function is specialized in terms of the product in such a way that the same worker carries out all the processes necessary for this product, though they differ technically from each other'. In specialization of function, the function is 'differentiated according to the type of work so that the product is brought to completion only by combining, simultaneously or successively, the work of a number of persons.' Weber considered extensive specification of function characteristic of the Middle Ages. He followed Rodbertus in believing that the primary characteristic of the *oikos* of antiquity was 'the tendency to self-sufficiency in provision for needs by using the services of the household unit itself or of others dependent upon it' (Weber 1947: 231).

The list of occupations in classical Athens reveals that there was extensive 'specification of function' already in the economy and undermines Weber's views about the self-sufficient *oikos* of antiquity. The vast majority of occupations in the list are named for the item they produce (e.g., *artopoiios*, 'bread-maker', *anthrakeus*, 'charcoal-maker', *aspidopegos*, 'shield-maker'), not a part of a complex product (e.g., boiler-maker in ship-building) or one role among several steps of production (e.g., the 'charger', 'blower', 'regulator', in the early Bessemer steel process).<sup>5</sup> When we read about the workshops owned by Demosthenes' father, which employed 52 or 53 slaves, they are not differentiated according to the different roles they played in production, but simply called 'furniture-makers' or 'knife-makers' (Dem. 27.9). The only major exception to this general rule is the case of public building, where we find masons, sculptors, wax-modellers, woodcarvers, carpenters, sawyers, joiners, lathe-workers, painters, gilders, and labourers all working under the direction of architects and their assistants (see esp. Plut. *Per.* 12 with *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 474–9). In short, although there was extensive horizontal specialization in the Athenian economy, there was relatively little vertical specialization.

In the rest of this essay I will explore the implications for these two findings for our understanding of the Athenian economy. The second part will examine the implications of extensive horizontal specialization, especially its relationship to the rise of market relations. The third part of the essay will study the implications of the low level of vertical specialization for the nature of investment and the management of the *oikos*.

## II

The earliest thinker to observe the connection between the specialization of labour and the growth of the market was Plato. In the *Republic* (370 a–c) Plato argues that the community comes into existence because every man is not

self-sufficient, but needs many things. To provide him with all that he lacks, each person joins with others to form a community called the polis, where one man exchanges with another to make his life better. Since the three basic needs are food, shelter, and clothing the first polis will contain a farmer (*georgos*), a builder (*oikodomos*), a weaver (*byphantes*), a cobbler (*skutotomos*), and one other craftsman, left unspecified, to provide for the needs of the body. The farmer in turn will need tools, and this will require the addition of joiners (*tektones*), smiths (*chalkeis*), and other craftsmen. They will also need herdsmen to tend cows, oxen, sheep and other animals, which will help with ploughing and transportation and will provide wool and hides for clothing.

The main reason for the specialization of labour is that it is more efficient. Since each man is better suited to one task than to others, it is best for each man to work at just one activity, not at several. The result of specialization is an increase in the quantity and quality of goods, which are produced more easily in this way (369–71). Finley (1974: 27) claimed that the Greeks thought that the specialization of labour led only to an improvement in the quality of goods, not to an increase in quantity.<sup>6</sup> The passage from the *Republic* shows that he was wrong: Plato was aware that specialization led to greater efficiency and to a general increase in wealth.<sup>7</sup>

The development of specialization gives rise to the question, ‘how will these craftsmen exchange their products?’ The answer is simple: ‘by buying and selling’ (Pl. *Resp.* 371b). This will lead to the creation of a marketplace and the minting of coinage to facilitate exchange. Since those who produce their products and bring them to market do not have the time to wait around to find buyers, there must also be men who specialize in exchanging money for goods and goods for money, what we call commodity exchange. These are the *kapeloi*, shopkeepers (Pl. *Resp.* 371b–e).

As an account of social evolution, this passage from Plato’s *Republic* is to say the least simplistic and omits a great deal. Nothing is said about the role of law, religion and warfare in social development.<sup>8</sup> Nor does Plato consider the possibility that other forms of exchange might precede or co-exist with commodity exchange. What is significant for our purpose, however, is the link that Plato sees between the increasing specialization of labour and the growth of commodity exchange and his view of the origin of the polis. Plato did not see the early polis as a consumer city, but as a centre of exchange, whose central institution is the agora, the marketplace. He also saw that extensive specialization of labour would bring about the exchange of commodities in the market.

Plato gives the impression that specialization is all that is required to bring market exchange into existence. The historical record reveals that this is not so. For instance, there was considerable specialization of labour in the Roman villa, but no one would argue that the slaves working in a villa bought and sold the goods they produced with each other or that economic relations inside the villa formed a kind of market economy.<sup>9</sup> Nor will the volume of commodity exchange

be very great when farmers and craftsmen are compelled to make large payments to local leaders for protection against external enemies and to maintain internal order. Finally the market cannot function without peace and order: in a society plagued by violence and dissension, raids for plunder will replace buying and selling. For commodity exchange to exist, therefore, the participants must be free and autonomous, and there must be laws regulating exchange and magistrates to enforce them and keep order in the marketplace and in society in general. Protagoras saw this – he too noted the phenomenon of specialization, but argued that specialization by itself was not sufficient to bring the polis into existence (Pl. *Prt.* 322b–c). In addition to specialization, there needed to be a respect for justice, in specific terms, laws and magistrates to enforce them. In other words, specialization is a necessary condition for the rise of commodity exchange, but it is not a sufficient condition.

Finley used to sneer at what the Greek philosophers had to say about economic theory, but Plato is in agreement with modern economic theory. As Belshaw observes:

The exchange system of all economies, whether modern or not, derives from two sets of conditions. On the demand side there are the individual specific unsatiated wants which define the goals of activity. . . . On the supply side all exchange is based on differentiation of role. . . . the action correlate of differentiated roles is the division of labor, which of course is based not only on the way property is controlled, but also on the distribution of skills and socially approved behavior. Unsatiated wants and the division of labor create exchange. . . . the division of labor makes it possible to use technical specialization with greatest efficiency. It also makes it possible for a flow of wealth to take place, leading to profit-taking situations and the ability to accumulate capital.

(Belshaw 1965: 110–11)

*Nil novum sub sole*: Belshaw expresses in technical and inelegant language (with a few scholarly qualifications) what Plato had already realized 2,400 years ago.

Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE satisfied the conditions needed to create market-exchange. As we can see from the list, there was extensive specialization of labour: this made it inevitable that the individual would need to acquire goods and services outside his immediate circle of friends, neighbours, and family. Solon's *seisachtheia* freed the citizens of Attica from paying large amounts to local lords, and Kleisthenes abolished the tax on produce imposed by Peisistratos (Harris 1997). This placed all the citizens of Attica on an equal footing where they could bargain freely with each other (Bresson 2000: 272–4). The lawcode of Solon and subsequent legislation created the regulations to keep order in the agora and instituted magistrates like the *agoranomoi* to enforce them

(Stanley 1976). The scale of specialization made it impossible to rely on local networks or the small circle of relations bound together by kinship and *philia*. Plato skipped over many stages of social evolution and jumped from *le point zéro* to the end of a long process. Despite these omissions his analysis is valuable for drawing attention to the connection between specialization and the growth of the market.

Ancient historians often speak about 'the market' as if there were only one type of market. But anthropologists have observed that there are different types of markets and various levels of market activity. For instance, Skinner (1964) found three levels of markets in traditional rural China. These ranged from standard markets that met periodically to central markets that met twice a day and had permanent shops. Mintz (1960) grouped markets in Haiti into four categories: the highest level were strategic markets which brought together local products for export, transferred staple crops to other regions, and received imports for local consumption. At the lower end were local markets which served for local exchange and received imports from other markets. These examples are drawn from more complex and advanced economies. In most peasant societies, by contrast, Berry notes that:

Markets are periodic rather than permanent and continuous. The market is not open every day, but only once every few days on a regularly scheduled basis, because the per capita demand for goods sold in the market is small, the market area is limited by primitive transport technology, and the aggregate demand is therefore insufficient to support permanent shops. Businessmen adjust by visiting several markets on a regular basis; and by accumulating the trade of several market areas they are able to survive.

(Berry 1967: 93)

As the economy grows, these periodic markets are either replaced or supplemented by permanent markets. Several factors contribute to the rise of permanent markets such as 'the establishment of law and order, introduction of cash as an exchange medium, expansion of transport facilities, and growth of non-agricultural markets for foodstuffs'. Other factors include increases in demand from rising income and in supply from more complex industrial organization (Berry 1967: 90). The rise of the permanent market is thus accompanied by an increase in the specialization of labour. The findings of modern social scientists thereby confirm and help to fill in the details of the development only sketched by Plato.

The agora at Athens was not a periodic market serving the restricted needs of a subsistence economy. The high degree of horizontal specialization led to the creation of a permanent market created to link farmers with the dozens of craftsmen working in Athens and (as we will see) to link both groups with foreign markets. The agora was a fixed area marked out by boundary

stones. Though we hear about some temporary stalls made of wicker (Dem. 18.169), workshops and stores were made of stone and other durable materials (Bettalli 1985).

The market in Athens was so large that it was divided into several different sections.<sup>10</sup> Parts of the agora were named after the goods sold there. Xenophon (*Oec.* 8.22) did not worry about his slave knowing where to go in the agora to buy goods because they were all kept in an assigned place. Pollux (9.47–8) mentions how Eupolis singled out the place ‘where books are for sale’ and has one of his characters recall how ‘I went around to the garlic and the onions and the incense and straight to the perfume, and around to the trinkets (*gelge*)’. If one were looking for wine, one went to the area around the city gate in the Kerameikos (Isae. 7.20). Alexis in his *Kalasiris* tells about a quarter known as ‘the rings’ where utensils were sold (Poll. 10.18–19). A separate part of the market was called the ‘women’s agora’ where one could find items just for women (Poll. 10.19). Other parts of the market were devoted to fine foods, cheese and slaves (Poll. 10.19). And there was a large quarter of the city called the Kerameikos after the potters who dominated this part of the city. Wycherley (1957: 221) notes ‘it stretched from the agora far to the northwest, where it included the great cemetery and reached the Academy’. The Athenian agora was clearly a permanent market, so large that it was divided into separate areas; there is no evidence that it met only periodically.<sup>11</sup> The high level of horizontal specialization in the Athenian economy was thus reflected in the geography of its market place.

But we should not focus exclusively on the physical aspects of the agora. As Bohannon and Dalton point out,

To study markets it is necessary that the distinction between the institution of market place and the principle of market exchange be pointed up clearly. The market place is a specific site where a group of buyers and a group of sellers meet. The market principle is the determination of prices by the forces of supply and demand regardless of the scale of transactions. . . . the two of course overlap in many instances, but not by any means in all.

(Bohannon and Dalton 1962: 1)

The evidence for activity in the Athenian agora shows that the extensive specialization created the conditions for market exchange. The price of grain often fluctuated as a result of changes in supply. When the Byzantines, Chalcedonians and Kyzicenes seized the ships bringing grain to Athens in 362/1, the price of grain in the Piraeus rose sharply (Dem. 50.6). A foreign merchant tells an Athenian court how during a shortage the arrival of a shipment from Sicily caused the price of grain to fall (Dem. 56.9). Another litigant accuses his opponent Phainippos of selling grain at 18 drachmas per medimnos, three times the normal price (Dem. 42.20, 31). Two decrees honour



merchants who sold grain at the normal price of five drachmas during a shortage (IG II<sup>2</sup> 360. 54–6; 408. 13–14). There would have been no reason to honour these men unless the actual price of grain at the time was much higher than normal.

Millett (1990: 193) believes ‘grain was probably exceptional in the extent to which customary and actual prices tended to diverge; with other less essential items, the discrepancy might be negligible’. But the same litigant who complained about Phainippos’ profits from selling grain also charged that he had sold wine at twelve drachmas a measure, triple its regular price (Dem. 42.20, 31). In Aristophanes’ *Peace* (1198–1202) a sickle-maker thanks Trygaeus for making peace: before that, no one would buy a sickle from him, not even for a small piece of change. Now he sells them for fifty drachmas apiece. Another man is now selling jugs at three drachmas each for use in the countryside. But not all have prospered by the new peace. A seller of arms is angry at Trygaeus for ruining his business (1212–13). When he offers Trygaeus a breastplate for 1,000 drachmas, he cannot sell it to him at any price (1224–39). In the *Knights* the Sausage-Seller grabs the attention of the Council by telling them that sardines are now cheaper than they have ever been since the beginning of the war (644–5). The Paphlagonian tries to recapture their attention by offering a sacrifice to Artemis if the price for sardines goes down to one obol for a hundred (647–50). Later in the play the Sausage-Seller reminds his master, The People, how cheap the price of silphium was recently (894–5).

In his *Characters* (4.12) Theophrastos tells how a man on his way into town asks passers-by about the price of hides and dried fish. His question would have made little sense unless the prices for these goods fluctuated considerably. Xenophon (*Poroi* 4.5) notes how ‘if there are more coppersmiths, for example, copperwork becomes cheap and the coppersmiths retire. The same is true in the iron trade.’

These passages show that the exchange of many commodities if not all in the agora were subject to the market principle. There was of course some haggling between individual buyers and sellers over a few obols, but the range within which this haggling occurred was set by the forces of supply and demand (Millett 1990: 193–4).<sup>12</sup> Extensive specialization of labour made it inevitable that the average Athenian (or average metic) would have dealings with those outside the restricted circle of family, neighbours, and friends. When he bought and sold, he thus had to enter the world of market relations, which were regulated not by the informal rules of *philia* (‘friendship’), but by the written laws of the polis (cf. Vélissaropoulos, this volume).

An Athenian might think about politics in the Assembly, cultivate friendships in the gymnasia and at symposia, and at home try to avoid quarrels with family and neighbours. But when he set foot in the agora, the main thing he thought about was *kerdos*, that is, getting a bargain. An Athenian might mingle with slaves, foreigners and the poor in the agora, but he did not pay much attention to race, status or gender when looking for something to buy.



When Diogenes brought a friend into the marketplace, he judged everything by its price:

Diogenes took him to the perfume shop and inquired how much was the kotyle of henna. 'A mina', said the seller. 'The city is expensive', cried the man. Again he took the man off to the cookshop and inquired the price of trimmings. 'Three drachmas.' 'The city is expensive', cried the man. Next he took him to the soft wool and asked him the price of a sheep. 'A mina', was the reply. 'The city is expensive.' 'Now come this way', said Diogenes, and took the man to the lupins. 'How much is a choinix?' 'One bronze coin.' 'The city is cheap', cried Diogenes. Yet again they went to the figs. 'Two bronze coins', they were told was the price. 'And the myrtleberries?' 'Two coppers.' 'The city is a cheap place', said Diogenes again.

(Stob. 3.1.9)

Other philosophers might have had idealistic notions about how to judge a city; Diogenes was a Cynic and had no such illusions. When men entered the agora, they looked at what things cost and nothing else.

To what extent did the specialization of labour generate trade between Athens and other poleis? Plato (*Resp.* 370e–371b) connects the growth of specialization with the development of overseas trade. Since the polis requires so many different *technai* (crafts), it will be impossible to find a location for a polis that will not require imports. Plato hastens to point out that the polis will also need to export goods to pay for its imports (for the need to balance imports and exports see Bresson 2000: 109–30). Plato may have been describing a utopian community, but many Greek poleis also carried on extensive overseas trade. Pericles in the 'Funeral Oration' does not boast about Athenian self-sufficiency, the ability to produce everything they need on their own soil. Instead he claims 'the greatness of our city brings it about that all the good things from all over the world flow in to us, so that it seems just as natural to enjoy foreign goods as our own local products' (Thuc. 2.38). The Old Oligarch ([Xen] *Ath. Pol.* 2.7) notes how the Athenians trade with many different areas and import exotic delicacies from abroad; Sicily, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, Lydia, Pontus, the Peloponnese and other regions send their special products to Athens.

It is well known that the Athenians imported large quantities of grain, but these two passages suggest that grain was only one of many imports. The comic poets help to fill in the details by listing many of the specific items that were imported. In the *Acharnians* Aristophanes has a trader from Thebes bring a vast array of goods for Dikaiopolis to buy: 'marjoram, pennyroyal, rush-mats, lamp-wicks, ducks, jackdaws, francolins, coots, wrens, and dabchicks' (874–6) and 'geese, hares, foxes, moles, hedge-hogs, cats, badgers, martens, otters, Copaic eels' (878–80). Dikaiopolis is especially delighted with the eels, and complains he has had to go without them for almost five years (889–90). From the

Megarian trader he hopes to buy salt and garlic (760–1). When he learns Athenian attacks have destroyed these, he buys ‘pigs’ instead. These turn out to be the Megarian’s daughters, which enables Aristophanes to make several crude jokes at their expense. Comedy aside, the scene is valuable for illustrating the range of goods the Athenians might buy from neighbouring poleis.

Finley (1999a: 107) also drew on the *Acharnians* to support his primitivist views about the nature of peasant markets in Attica.<sup>13</sup> But he looked only at the beginning of the play, where Dikaiopolis nostalgically yearns to return to his deme, where no one ever used the word ‘buy’ and the land produced everything he needed (33–6). From these few lines he drew far-reaching conclusions about the nature of peasant markets in Attica. It would be a serious mistake to rely on this utopian fantasy as evidence for economic relations between Athens and its countryside. Dikaiopolis is clearly idealizing the period before the war and drawing on the imagery of the Golden Age in myth. His description of life before the war is no more reliable as historical evidence than Hesiod’s portrait of the first generation in the Myth of the Ages of Men (*Op.* 116–18, 173) where no one had to work or trade because the earth bore fruit spontaneously.<sup>14</sup> Had Finley read the rest of the play, he would have discovered that Dikaiopolis does not want peace because he wants to retreat to the isolation of his autarkic homestead. Dikaiopolis makes his treaty with the enemy to reap the benefits of trade with other poleis.

We should bear in mind that Dikaiopolis comes not from the wealthy and refined strata of Athenian society. Like many in the audience, he is a farmer of average means. The agora did not cater just to the affluent but to all Athenians. When addressing a court made up of rich and poor alike, a client of Lysias (24.20) observes that ‘each of you makes a habit of hanging around a certain place – one goes to the perfume shop, another to the barbers, and yet another to the cobbler’s’ (see also Dem. 25.52). The extensive level of horizontal specialization was therefore generated not by the elite’s tastes for luxury goods but by widespread demand for a broad range of commodities.

The *Acharnians* attests to the variety of goods Athenians bought from their immediate neighbours. Fragments of the comic poets identify more distant trading partners. Antiphanes gives a brief list of foreign imports: ‘from Elis a cook, from Argos a cooking pot, Phliasian wine, from Corinth blankets, fish from Sicyon, from Aegina flute-girls, Sicilian cheese’. Hermippos provides a more extensive catalogue:

From Cyrene stalks of silphium, and oxbides, from the Hellespont mackerel and all sorts of dried fish, from Thessaly pudding, and ribs of beef, . . . the Syracusans bring pigs and cheese . . . From Egypt masts with sails and papyrus. From Syria frankincense, beautiful Crete supplies cypress for the gods, Libya much ivory for sale, Rhodes raisins and dried figs for sweet dreams. Slaves come from Phrygia, mercenaries from Arcadia, Pagasae sends slaves and branded scoundrels. The

Paphlagonians send Zeus' acorns and shining almonds (these are what adorn a feast). Phoenicia for its part fruit of palm and semodalin, Carthage carpets and richly coloured pillows.

(Hermippos fr. 63 K-A)

What is noteworthy is the mixture of agricultural and manufactured items. The range of imported goods listed by the comic poets thus confirms the general statements about trade found in Thucydides and the Old Oligarch and demonstrates that Athenian imports were not limited to grain.

One might argue that these are impressionistic statements and may exaggerate the extent of foreign trade. Scholars often complain that it is difficult to do economic history of Athens because we lack reliable statistics, but in the case of overseas trade they have ignored a key passage, Andokides 1.133–5.<sup>15</sup> Andokides recounts how his enemy Agyrrhios conspired with rival bidders for the *pentekoste* (the two per cent tax on imports) to acquire the contract for the tax at a low price. Thanks to this scheme, he and his enemies made a profit of three talents. When Agyrrhios and his cronies tried to work the same scheme the next year, Andokides put in a bid of thirty-six talents and won the contract. In the following year (401) Andokides and his partners made all the payments to the polis as well as pocketing a small profit for themselves. Andokides gives no testimony but the figures ought to be in the right order of magnitude.<sup>16</sup> One must keep in mind that the bidding was monitored by the Council, where 500 Athenians served each year and the bidding was conducted in public. If Andokides and his partners paid 36 talents for the contract and made a small profit of one or two talents, the total volume of imports in 401 would have been 1900 talents. It is also difficult to believe that Andokides and his partners were so efficient that they managed to exact payment from every single ship that unloaded goods in Attica. Smuggling could easily have added several hundred talents to this total, lifting it above  $2,000 \text{ a year} \times 6000 \text{ dr.} = 12,000,000 \text{ dr.}$  per year. If we put the population of Attica at 300,000, this means there were 40 drachmas worth of imports per person every year or 160 drachmas for a household of four persons. To earn this sum, a man working at the rate of a drachma a day would have had to work for four months.

We must also bear in mind that in 401 Athens was not at the height of its power and prosperity: in 405/4 the city had endured a terrible siege and in the following year a bloody civil war. Even after the restoration of peace and democracy in 403 Athens was without a fleet and an empire. If the *pentekoste* remained a fixed proportion of all revenues this means that imports increased twelve times between 400 and the 320s. That points to a figure of 480 drachmas of imports per person and 1920 drachmas per family. This figure is probably too high since the increase in revenues probably resulted not only from the increase in trade but also from adding new sources of revenue such as mining leases. This would diminish the proportion supplied by the *pentekoste*. Or we can compare the value of imports to the total amount of public revenue.

Demosthenes (10.38) says public revenues rose from 100 to 400 talents a year by the middle of the century, and they appear to have reached 1200 talents a year under Lykourgos.<sup>17</sup>

The evidence we have for exchange and trade in Athens thus confirms Plato's insights about the economy. The high degree of horizontal specialization meant the average Athenian's sphere of exchange would have expanded far beyond the limited circle of friends, neighbours, and family. The large number of occupations created a need for permanent market-places and the conditions for market exchange. The level of horizontal specialization was not only high enough to link people from all over Attica into market relations, but also to join Athens with other poleis into a thriving network of overseas trade.

### III

The low level of vertical specialization was obviously the result of the rudimentary technology of the ancient world. To illustrate the point, I will briefly look at two important crafts, charcoal production (Olson 1991) and metallurgy (Healy 1978). Charcoal is the solid residue from wood that has been carbonized or pyrolyzed under controlled conditions in a sealed-off space. There were two basic methods for making charcoal in antiquity, the pit method and the mound method. In the first method one digs a pit filled with wood, starts a fire, then covers it with vegetation or a layer of earth. A small pit will smoulder for two days and then will be uncovered to cool for several more days. If the pit is larger, say 6 m.  $\times$  2.7 m.  $\times$  1.2 m., it will smoulder for 20 to 30 days and take 60 days to cool. The mound method is more suitable where the ground is rocky or the soil is shallow. In this method a stake is placed in the ground and wood is heaped up around it. This is covered by a layer of grass, leaves and straw and another layer of soil. Burning is controlled by boring vent holes through the layer of soil and continues until the smoke is clear. At this point the vent holes are plugged and the mound is left to cool for several weeks. Such a simple technology clearly required no 'capital investment'. All the materials needed to produce charcoal could be gathered by foraging in the countryside, and all the tasks involved could be performed by one or two men.

Probably the most advanced technology in classical Athens was metallurgy, but its operations were not all that complex (Healy 1978). The methods of extracting ore were primitive: the mines in Laurion were narrow shafts, which did not penetrate far below the surface and could be worked by a few slaves with chisels and other simple tools. A small number of slaves was needed to wash the ore and prepare it for smelting, which was done in small furnaces. The mining works owned by Pantainetos employed only thirty slaves (Dem. 37.4). Silver was then made into coins by individual minters; iron was forged by hammering on an anvil and quenching in cold water by a smith working by himself (e.g., Hom. *Od.* 9.391–93; Hdt. 1.68).

Given the low level of technology and vertical specialization, very little investment was required to set up a workshop and take advantage of market opportunities. The workshop of knife-makers owned by Demosthenes' father was worth only 160–5 minai (see below). The value of the workshop of furniture-makers pledged to him as security was lower, just 65–70 minai. When Pantainetos sold the workshop he owned in the mining district, the entire business fetched three talents 2600 drachmas (Dem. 37.31, cf. 50). Mantitheus was able to purchase rights to mining properties with a loan of just 20 minai from the banker Blepaeus (Dem. 40. 52). Epicrates bought a perfume shop for 40 minai (Hyp. *Against Athenogenes*, 18). And these were probably the most expensive operations. The only area where large investment was required was the construction of temples and other large buildings, which was handled by the polis.

The figures found on several horoi point to the same range of prices for workshops. Thirteen of these horoi were placed next to workshops that had been pledged as security for loans, and eight of these give the amount of the loan secured by the property. The two highest amounts are 6,000 drachmae (horoi nos. 87 and 88), the next highest 1,700 dr (horos no. 90A). The rest are lower (horos no. 7: 750 dr.; horos no. 86: 800 dr.; horos no. 90: 700 dr.; horoi nos. 92A and 92B: 500 dr. each). Since it was customary for the value of the security to be roughly twice the size of the loan, the value of these workshops ranged from about two talents down to 1,000 drachmas (Harris 1988: 362–4). The higher figures were large sums for the average Athenian, but a small workshop was not beyond his means. The largest workshops were less than three talents, the minimum amount needed to perform liturgies (Davies 1971: xx–xxiv). And those who fell outside the liturgical class could easily acquire a small workshop with their own funds or borrow the money needed to buy a larger business from friends, neighbours, and family.<sup>18</sup>

Because the investment needed to start up a business was not beyond the resources of the individual *oikos*, it is not surprising to find that the Athenians did not make a clear distinction between the *oikos* and the business enterprise or *ergasterion*. The best illustration of the mingling of *oikos* and *ergasterion* is the inventory of his father's property presented by the orator Demosthenes. Demosthenes' father died when he was eight, and his estate was run by several guardians, who embezzled and mismanaged his assets until he came of age and prosecuted them in court. At the trial he listed all his father's assets at his death (Dem. 27.9–11).<sup>19</sup>

## PRODUCTIVE (ἐνεργά) ASSETS

### Workshop of knife-makers

32 or 33 slaves worth 5 or 6 minai, none worth less  
than 3 minai

(32 or 33 × 5 minai = 160–5 minai)

160–5 minai

Revenue per annum: 30 minai or 18–19% return on assets

**Workshop of furniture-makers**

20 slaves pledged as security for a loan of 40 minai

Average value 3–3½ minai = 60–70 minai 60–70 minai

Revenue per annum: 12 minai or 17–18% return on assets

(If one takes 40 minai as the value, the return is 30%)

Talent lent out at 12% interest

60 minai

Revenue per annum: 7 minai, 20 dr.

**TOTAL VALUE OF PRODUCTIVE ASSETS:**

290 minai

(κεφάλαιος τέτταρα τάλαντα καὶ πεντακισχίλια,

‘four talents and 5,000 drachmae’)

**TOTAL REVENUE PER ANNUM: 49 minai, 20 dr.**

rounded up to 50 minai

(πεντήκοντα μναὶ τοῦ ἐνιαύτου ἑκάστου, ‘fifty minai each year’)

For other examples of rounding, see Dem. 27.17, 37

**Other Assets**

Ivory and iron for knives, wood for furniture

80 minai

Copper and gall

70 minai

Family house

30 minai

Personal items of Demosthenes’ mother

100 minai

Silver (unminted)

80 minai

Maritime loan to Xuthos

70 minai

Money deposited in the bank of Pasion

24 minai

Money deposited in the bank of Pylades

6 minai

Money entrusted to Demomeles

16 minai

**TOTAL OF OTHER ASSETS: 8 talents 50 minai**

rounded down from

536 minai

**SUM TOTAL OF ALL ASSETS: 14 tal. rounded up from**

826 minai

What is revealing for our topic is how Demosthenes does not separate the two workshops from the rest of his father’s estate. The assets in the workshop are divided into productive and ‘passive’ (not producing revenue). Demosthenes does not list all the assets in one workshop separately from those of the other workshop and the rest of the *oikos*. The raw materials in the furniture shop are instead combined, mingled in with his mother’s personal belongings, silver and various loans.

Since the Athenians did not distinguish clearly between the activities of the *oikos* and those of the *ergasterion*, it is not surprising that they did not develop the legal notion of corporation or partnership. The *ergasterion* was not an inde-

pendent legal entity, whose assets were legally separate from the personal assets of the individuals who owned it. As Edward Cohen (1992: 64) shrewdly observes, the Attic orators equate the individual banker and his bank. For instance, Demosthenes in one sentence speaks about money owed to Pasion and in the next says the same loan was made by Pasion's bank (Dem. 45.31–2). If two or more men decided to cooperate in business, they did not form a partnership but entered into a short-term contract to apportion liability and rights to profits (Harris 1989).

Nor did the Athenians need laws regulating the activities of free business agents. The absence of vertical specialization meant that business was not so complex that it required a team of agents working in different places to carry on operations. Besides, if a wealthy man needed someone to represent him in business dealings, he could order his slave to carry out his instructions and conclude agreements on his behalf. If the slave failed to obey, his master did not have to appeal to the court to enforce laws about agency.<sup>20</sup> Matters were much more simple: the master simply beat or tortured his slave until he performed his duty as agent.<sup>21</sup> For example, Komon entrusted his affairs to his slave Moschion. When it was discovered that Moschion was embezzling money, Komon's sons had him tortured to find out where the stolen money was (Dem. 48.14–17). Thus the 'wonderful' resources of the *oikos* were all the Athenians needed to carry on business in an economy where there was very little vertical specialization.

Since the *oikos* and the business were virtually indistinguishable, one might assume that the Athenians did not run their *ergasteria* in a business-like fashion, that is, with an eye to maximizing profits. In fact, Finley argued that the average Athenian was not capable of managing his household efficiently because he lacked the bookkeeping methods that would have enabled him to compare the profitability of different enterprises (Finley 1985c: 110–11, 116–17). In particular, he noted the absence of double-entry bookkeeping, the method of listing all credits in one column and all debits in another, then adding the totals in each column and comparing them to arrive at a figure for profit or loss (de Ste. Croix 1956). It is certainly true that the Greeks did not develop the double-entry method, but it is not because they were not interested in running their households and workshops efficiently. As Macve (1985: 257–8) has pointed out, double-entry bookkeeping is only one way of calculating profit. One can also take an inventory of all assets at the beginning of a period of time, then take another inventory at the end of this period and compare the totals of both inventories to arrive at a figure for profit or loss. Demosthenes appears to have used this method when he figured out the losses incurred by his father's estate under the management of his unscrupulous guardians.

Despite the absence of double-entry bookkeeping the Athenians appear to have understood the difference between gross and net income and between principal or assets and the revenue derived from them. Macve (1985: 239–57) also points out that one does not need double-entry bookkeeping to compare



the profitability of different enterprises and make rational economic decisions. Apollodoros, when faced with the choice between a workshop making shields and a bank, chose the workshop because it was a safer investment although it brought in less revenue (Dem. 36.11). Apollodoros clearly had access to records detailing the revenues of each business. The fact that the bank was more risky suggests he was able to study its revenues over a long period and find that they varied from one year to the next in contrast to the workshop, whose revenues were more steady even though their average revenues per annum were less. Given the low level of vertical specialization, a wealthy Athenian did not need sophisticated accounting methods to compare the profitability of different activities. A few rudimentary calculations were all that were necessary.<sup>22</sup>

Even though a wealthy Athenian aspired to run his household efficiently, managing an *oikos* did not need to be a full-time job. Despite the demands of supervising the work of his slaves, Ischomachos still found time to organize liturgies, speak in court and participate in politics (Xen. *Oec.* 11).<sup>23</sup> The low level of vertical specialization in the *oikos* did not require the professional skills and constant attention of the modern entrepreneur. Krause defines the entrepreneur as:

one who unites all the means of production to create goods by determining the objectives of the business enterprise; by developing and maintaining the business organization and building 'efficient' relations with workers; by securing adequate financial resources; by acquiring 'efficient' technology and updating it with the best innovations; by developing new markets and products; and by nurturing good relations with the government and the public.

(Krause 1992: 421 with n. 12)

Some of these tasks were relevant to running an *oikos*, but most were not. Ischomachos certainly ran his household in an 'entrepreneurial spirit', with an eye to *kerdos*,<sup>24</sup> but his responsibilities as a manager were not so demanding that they left him with no time for other pursuits. Ischomachos states his goals quite succinctly: 'I begin by worshipping the gods, and what I do is to make it possible for them to grant my prayers for physical health, public recognition, goodwill from my friends, honourable survival in war and increasing wealth blamelessly earned' (Xen. *Oec.* 11). In short he aimed to be both a *homo politicus* and a *homo oeconomicus*, and the low level of vertical specialization in his *oikos* permitted him to pursue both goals at once. Ischomachos' multiple aspirations were not unusual. Socrates remarks in the same dialogue that 'those who are able not only to provide for their own households, but also to create a surplus, with which to beautify their cities and alleviate their friends' burdens, are regarded as impressive and formidable men' (Xen. *Oec.* 11). Perikles in the 'Funeral Oration' echoes this sentiment when he praises the Athenians because the same



men who manage their public affairs also pay close attention to their private affairs. Even those who spend their time working (presumably the less affluent) still remain well informed about public business (Thuc. 2.40.2).

This ideal of pursuing wealth and participating in politics was not impracticable because politics was not a full-time job either. Indeed, Aischines (3.220–1) criticizes his rival Demosthenes for his constant involvement in politics. In his opinion, the true patriot addresses the Assembly only when the city needs his advice, not every day. One should bear in mind that the Assembly met only 40–50 times a year and meetings often ended in the morning; trials lasted only one day.<sup>25</sup> Not even the Council met every day, and one could only serve on that body once or twice in a lifetime (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 62.3). The generalship was the most time-consuming duty, but most campaigning took place in late spring to early fall, in other words, after the harvest was complete and before planting began (Hanson 1995: 251–2). A farmer like Ischomachos could thus serve on campaign and run his farm at the same time.

On the other hand one had to be a canny *homo oeconomicus* to achieve success as a *homo politicus*. Kritoboulos turns to Socrates for advice about how to run his *oikos* not because he does not have enough to support his own family and their expensive life-style, but because he has social and political ambitions.

First of all, I see you have to offer many large sacrifices to the gods. If you did not, both gods and men would be angry with you. Next, you have an obligation to entertain guests from abroad. Then you have to invite your fellow citizens to dinner and do them favours. If you do not, you would lose friends. I also notice that the State is already asking you to spend money on horse-rearing, choruses and athletic contests, and on the public welfare. If we go to war, I know they will make you pay for triremes and contribute the war-tax.

(Xen. *Oec.* 2)

These burdens could be quite substantial. One of Lysias' clients (Lys. 21.1–6) lists the sums he spent on liturgies between 409 and 404: six talents over seven years for equipping warships, then several more talents for religious festivals. The wealthy Athenian could not afford to act like a modern rentier, content to draw revenues without any concern for developing the economic potential of his land and workshops, if he wanted to compete in politics. The businessman Antisthenes defeated the soldier Nikomachides in an election for general because he knew the art of making money. His efficiently run business enabled him to finance choruses, win public competitions, and gain election to office (Xen. *Mem.* 3.4).

By studying the nature of specialization, therefore, we can arrive at a better understanding not only of the Athenian economy but also of Athenian values. The high level of horizontal specialization created the conditions for market exchange and the possibility of accumulating wealth through buying and

selling. The polis took advantage of the market by means of the liturgy system, which encouraged the wealthy to spend their gains on the public good in exchange for fame and political office. To use Bourdieu's term, the polis offered plentiful symbolic capital in return for monetary capital. And the low level vertical specialization meant the wealthy could manage their households efficiently and participate in politics at the same time. *Pace* Weber, economic rationality was not incompatible with the pursuit of status and honour. On the contrary, they tended to support and reinforce each other.<sup>26</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 This is not the place to list all the numerous omissions in this 'survey' article. The most serious are the complete failure to mention the contribution of epigraphy during the last century and a half and the absence of any mention of the valuable studies of public finance by Migeotte (1984, 1992). A reliable survey of work on the Greek economy since the publication of Finley's *Ancient Economy* (originally 1973) is still a desideratum.
- 2 I refer to the horoi by the numbers assigned in Finley 1985c.
- 3 *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1611.9 gives a total of 283 triremes in 357/6, and *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1613.302, 349 ships in 353/2.
- 4 A list of metics awarded certain rights between 403 and 400 gives their occupations (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 10). Out of the eighteen occupations presumed only four are farmers.
- 5 On the early Bessemer process see Krause 1992: 74–5.
- 6 Finley relies exclusively on Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.5 and doubtfully claims Xenophon believes the specialization of crafts leads to 'improvement of quality, not increase in production'. Finley claims 'division of labour is not often discussed by ancient writers, but when it is, the interest is regularly in craftsmanship, in quality'. Instead of citing ancient evidence, Finley refers to Roll (1945). But Roll discusses only the passage from Plato's *Republic*, which he misinterprets. Despite the importance of this passage for Greek economic thought, there is no reference to it in Finley's *The Ancient Economy* (1999a).
- 7 I owe this point to Schofield (1993: 190).
- 8 Other ancient authors place the invention of crafts and the growth of exchange to a later stage in social development. On ancient theories of the origins of society see Cole (1990).
- 9 For specialization of labour in the Roman villa see Bradley (1994: 58–60).
- 10 When referring to the agora, it is important to note the distinction made by de Ste. Croix (1972: 267–9) between the agora in the narrow sense of the space considered sacred and marked out by horoi and agora in the broader sense of the area where buying and selling are done. In what follows I use the term in the broader sense. Fischer-Hansen (2000: 92) notes that the considerable evidence for workshops in the western Greek world seriously undermines Finley's view that the Greek polis was a consumer city. These workshops are too numerous to have served just local consumers, but were clearly aimed at generating exports.
- 11 The author of the scholion on Ar. *Ach.* 43 reports that the slave market was open only on the first of the month, but slaves were an unusual commodity. Though numerous, they were obviously not traded in the same volume as other commodities, which would explain why the slave market was periodic and thus an exception. Lys. 23.6 says that the Plataians gather at the cheese shops on the last day of the month, but there is no need to think others did not frequent these

shops on other days. Stanley (1976: 54, with n.170) notes it was customary to close the agora when the Assembly met. This indicates the agora was normally full when the Assembly met, which could have been any day except for festival days, see Mikalson 1975 and Harris 1991.

- 12 Millett (1990: 189–90) cites a few instances where customers struck up friendships with shopkeepers and gained credit, but this is irrelevant to the formation of price and hardly proves that *philia* was more important than supply and demand in the agora. Besides this kind of friendship is not inconsistent with economic rationality. As any good businesswoman will tell you, fostering good customer relations and maintaining long-term relationships is key to any successful sales strategy in the modern economy. For the interplay of *philia* and market relations see Shipton (1997: 411–12).
- 13 Gallant (1991: 100–1) likewise uses this passage to support his contention that ‘the market seems to have played only a minor, peripheral role in the domestic economy of most Greek peasants’. He also claims in ‘Greek communities generally markets were periodic’ but ignores all the evidence for small farmers frequenting permanent markets.
- 14 For the link between peace and fertility see Hesiod *Op.* 225–37 with West (1978) 216 for parallels. Here these two themes are explicitly connected with the absence of overseas trade.
- 15 I can find no reference to this passage in the work of Moses Finley. To my knowledge the only scholars who have noted the importance of the passage and analysed its implications are Isager and Hansen (1975: 50–2).
- 16 One could argue that Andokides may have exaggerated the amount of his own bid and lowered the size of his opponents’ bid. But at the same time it was in his interest to maximize the profit made by his rivals and to minimize the profit made by himself and his partners. In other words the possible distortions inherent in the evidence tend to cancel each other out.
- 17 Plut. *Mor.* 842f with the careful analysis of Faraguna (1992: 171, n.1). One should keep in mind that imported grain was subject to a different tax, the *pentekoste sitou*, so the figure for the *pentekoste* covers non-grain imports. For the *pentekoste sitou*, see Harris (1999). Yet even if one includes grain imports in the figure for imports implied by Andokides, the amount of non-grain imports is still high. As Robin Osborne (pers. comm.) remarks, ‘Even if one accepts the grain imports of 800,000 medimnoi which Demosthenes claims were regular, then at a reasonably standard 3 dr. a medimnos that grain would have been worth just 2,400,000 dr., and even at a high price of 6 dr. a medimnos it would have been worth only 4,800,000 dr., still less than 50% of the 10,800,000 dr. total imports taxed by Andokides.’
- 18 For productive loans see Thompson (1981: 80–1). Finley (1999a: 197) misrepresents Thompson’s argument by neglecting to draw attention to the paucity of evidence for non-productive loans.
- 19 Davies (1971: 127–8) follows Finley (1985c: 116) in mistakenly assuming that the value of the slaves in the furniture shop was equal to the amount of the loan for which they were pledged as security. As a result, he cannot therefore get Demosthenes’ figures to add up. To his credit, however, Davies (1971: 129) recognizes that the slaves in the furniture shop were probably worth more than 4,000 drachmas. For Finley’s mistake see Harris (1988: 362–4).
- 20 Cohen (1992: 98–101) notices the use of business agents but can adduce no evidence for laws about free business agents. For the law about the liability of masters for the activities of their slaves see Hyp. *Against Athenogenes* 21–22. He also does not discuss how masters ‘settled’ disputes with slaves who acted as their agents.

- 21 Since Athenians could use slaves as business agents, the Athenians had no need to develop the legal concept of possessorial immunity and the distinction between larceny and embezzlement. D. Cohen (1983) tries to read this anachronistic distinction into the Athenian law of theft, but his argument breaks down because the words *klope* and *kleptein* can refer to cases of embezzlement as well as cases of theft. See my criticisms in Harris (1994).
- 22 For the use of accounts and the need for *akribēia* (accuracy) in managing the finances of the *oikos* see Faraguna (1994: 567–72). It is also significant that Apollodoros did not take any social factors into account when he made his decisions. For instance, he did not consider whether one enterprise was more respectable than the other. For the absence of prejudice against investment in crafts see Kron 1996.
- 23 Ischomachos employs a foreman (*epitropos*) to assist him but tells Socrates that the foreman must be trained and then constantly supervised (Xen. *Oec.* 12–13).
- 24 For the entrepreneurial spirit in the Athenian economy see Thompson (1982).
- 25 For the number of meetings of the Assembly see [Arist]. *Atb. Pol.* 43.3 with Harris 1986. For trials lasting only one day see MacDowell 2000.
- 26 I would like to thank the organizers of the KERDOS conference, Paul Cartledge, Edward Cohen and Lin Foxhall for inviting me to present a much shorter version of this paper in Cambridge. I would also like to thank Robin Osborne for reading a draft of this essay and offering both encouragement and valuable suggestions. The final version of this essay was written when I was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton in the fall of 1998. Another version of this paper was presented to the Association of Ancient Historians at Columbia University in May 1999.

## APPENDIX 1

## Occupations – Testimonia

References to K-A = R. Kassel and C. Austin (eds) (1983–) *Poetae comici graeci*  
Berlin and New York: de Gruyter.

<i>agalmatopoios</i>	statue-maker	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.9; <i>Pl. Prt.</i> 311c
<i>aggeiourgos</i>	jar-maker	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1576.69–72
<i>aipolos</i>	goatherd	<i>Isae.</i> 6.33; <i>Pl. Leg.</i> 639a
<i>akestria</i>	seamstress	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1556.27–9
<i>aleiptria</i>	masseuse	Antiphanes fr. 26 K-A ; <i>Lys.</i> fr. 88 Sauppe
<i>aliens</i>	see ( <i>b</i> ) <i>aliens</i>	
<i>allantopoles</i>	sausage-seller	<i>Ar. Eq.</i> 143
<i>alopolis</i>	see ( <i>b</i> ) <i>alopolis</i>	
<i>alphaltamoibos</i>	barley-dealer	<i>Ar. Av.</i> 491
<i>amorgantinos</i>	wool-worker	<i>Aeschin.</i> 1.97; <i>Ar. Lys.</i> 735
<i>ampelourgos</i>	vine-dresser	<i>Amphis</i> fr. 3 K-A (= <i>Stob.</i> 4.18.1); <i>Ar. Pax</i> 190; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1557.43–6, 92; 13179
<i>amphoreaphoros</i> or <i>-poios</i>	amphora-carrier or -maker	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1554.28–31

<i>andriantopoios</i>	statue-maker	Plut. <i>Alc.</i> II 140b; Xen. <i>Oec.</i> 6.13
<i>anthrakeus</i>	charcoal-maker	Men. <i>Epit.</i> 257–9, 465, (cf. 408)
<i>anthrakopoles</i>	charcoal-seller	Philyllius fr. 13 K-A
<i>architekton</i>	architect	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 32.22–8, 33–8; 50.5–6; 52B.9; 79.14–17; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 244.6
<i>arguramoibos</i>	money-changer	Pl. <i>Plt.</i> 289e
<i>argurokopos</i>	minter	Phryn. Com. fr. 5 K-A. Cf. <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1013.30
<i>argurokopeion</i>	silver-smith shop	Aeschines Socraticus 39; Arist. <i>Pr.</i> 936b26
<i>artokopos</i>	baker	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 11681; Pl. <i>Grg.</i> 518b
<i>artopoios</i>	baker	Xen. <i>Mem.</i> 2.7.6
<i>artopoles/</i> <i>artopolis</i>	bread-seller	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 546; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1556.30–2; [Arist.] <i>Ath. Pol.</i> 51.3; Ar. <i>Vesp.</i> 238; <i>Ran.</i> 858. <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.3 has <i>artop(oles)</i> or <i>artop(oios)</i> <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1566.15–17
<i>askopoios</i> or <i>phoros</i>	wineskin-carrier or -maker	Dem. 36.11
<i>aspidopogos</i>	shield-maker	Antiphanes fr. 49 K-A
<i>auletes/auletris</i>	flute-player	(= Ath. 14.618a; Plut. <i>Dem.</i> 4.6); fr. 50 K-A (= Ath. 8.343d); fr. 224 K-A (= Ath. 4.172); fr. 233.1–3 K-A (= Ath. <i>Epit.</i> 1.27d); Ar. <i>Ach.</i> 551; <i>Pax</i> 952; Dem. 21.13–14, 17, 156; Pl. <i>Prt.</i> 323a; 327a–c; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 8.4; 11.7, 11; <i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 1032.162–3; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 8883
<i>aulopoios</i>	flute-maker	Dion. Hal. <i>Isoc.</i> 1
<i>balaneus</i>	bathhouse-keeper	Ar. <i>Av.</i> 491; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 9.8
<i>bapheus</i>	dyer	Pl. <i>Resp.</i> 429d, Plut. <i>Per.</i> 12
<i>belonopoles</i>	needle-seller	Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 175
<i>bibliopoles</i>	bookseller	Theopomp. fr. 77 (Kock)
<i>boukolos/</i> <i>bouphorbos</i>	cowherd	Eur. <i>El.</i> 252; Pl. <i>Minos</i> 318
<i>bursodepses</i>	tanner	Ar. <i>Eq.</i> 44; <i>Plut.</i> 167; <i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 257.5–11; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1576.5–6
<i>bursopoles</i>	leather-seller	Ar. <i>Eq.</i> 44, 136, 139; <i>Pax</i> 270, 648
<i>chalkeus</i>	smith	Ar. <i>Av.</i> 490; <i>Plut.</i> 163, 513; Lycurg. <i>Leoc.</i> 58; <i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 422.198–99; <i>Hesp.</i> 67 [1998] p. 216
<i>charitopolis</i>	charm-seller	<i>IG</i> III(3) 68a.7–8

<i>chorodidaskalos</i>	chorus-trainer	Aeschin. 1.98; Dem. 21.17
<i>chremastistes</i>	business-man	Pl. <i>Grg.</i> 452a; <i>Resp.</i> 330b
<i>chrusochoos</i>	goldsmith	Ar. <i>Lys.</i> 408; Dem. 21.16; <i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 422.77–8; 444.274; 476.54–9; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1558.55–7; 1559.22–5
<i>chrusotes/</i> <i>chrusotria</i>	gilder	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1495.11–19; 1635.36–7; <i>IG</i> III(3) 69.4
<i>daktuliogluphos</i>	gem-engraver	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1559.26–31, 79–82
<i>daktuliopoios</i>	ring-maker	Pherecr. fr. 234 K-A (= Poll. 7.179)
<i>deipnopoios</i>	caterer	[Arist.] <i>Mag. Mor.</i> 2.7.26.1206a27
<i>didaskalos</i>	teacher	Isae. 9.28; Pl. <i>Prt.</i> 319e; 324d; 327e; 357e; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 7.5; <i>IG</i> III(3) 33.4; 34.2–3
<i>doruxos</i>	spear-maker	Ar. <i>Pax</i> 447, 1213, 1261–64
<i>drepanourgos</i>	sickle/pruning knife-maker	Ar. <i>Pax</i> 1197–206
<i>egkautes</i>	encaustic painter	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 476.26, 46–54, 270–80
<i>eiroplokos</i>	wool-weaver	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 13178
<i>elaiologos</i> or <i>elaiokomos</i>	olive-picker or -tender	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.8; Ar. <i>Vesp.</i> 712 (picker)
<i>elaiopoles</i>	olive-seller	Dem. 25.47
<i>emporos</i>	merchant	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 416.4–15; 1557.59–62; 1558.90–1; 1559.36–9; 1566.2; 1577.3; Antiphanes fr. 166.1–3 (= Ath. 3.108e); Antiphanes fr. 149 (= Stob. 4.17.17); Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 904, 1178–84; Lycurg. <i>Leoc.</i> 55; Ar. <i>Pax</i> 296; Dem. 8.25; 23.146; 32.1; 33.1–2; 35.49; 50.6; 52.3; 58.10–11
<i>epitropos</i>	overseer	Xen. <i>Oec.</i> 12.3; <i>Hesp.</i> 46 (1977) [p. 168], no. 3.13–15
<i>ergolabos</i>	contractor	Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 8.4; Pl. <i>Resp.</i> 373b
<i>eriopoles</i>	wool-seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1568.7–8
<i>erithos</i>	wool-worker	Dem. 57.45
<i>etaira</i>	see ( <i>b</i> ) <i>etaira</i>	
<i>gelgopoles</i>	garlic-seller	Cratin. fr. 48 (Kock)
<i>geometres</i>	surveyor/geometer	Pl. <i>Meno</i> 86e
<i>georgos</i>	farmer	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.1, 2, 5, 9, 11 (all metics); 1553.24–6; 1554.18–21; 1556.36–8; 1557.99–100;

		1558.63–5; 1566.39–41; 1570.69–70 (metics); Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 223, 903; <i>Pax</i> 296, 511, 603; [Xen.] <i>Ath.</i> <i>Pol.</i> 2.14; Pl. <i>Grg.</i> 490e <i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 554; 905; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.4; Antiphanes fr. 121 (= Stob. 4.18.13); Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 166; Dem. 54.7; Lys. 3.15–16; 23.2; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 10.14; 18.6
<i>gnaphheus</i>	fuller	
<i>gnaphallou- phantes</i>	flock-weaver	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 1341bis [= <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 7967]
<i>grammateus</i>	secretary (not a public office)	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 841; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1556.14–7
<i>grammatistes</i>	elementary schoolteacher	Pl. <i>Prt.</i> 312b; Dem. 19.281; Xen. <i>Symp.</i> 4.27
<i>grapheus</i>	painter	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 475.267–8; Alexis fr. 20.4–5 K-A (= Ath. 13.562d)
<i>(h)aliens</i>	fisherman	Alexis fr. 76 K-A; Alexis fr. 159 K-A (= Ath. 7.302f); Anaxandrides fr. 34.12–15 K-A (= Ath. 6.227b); Antiphanes fr. 188.16–17 K-A (= Ath. 8.342e); Xen. <i>Oec.</i> 16.7
<i>(h)alopolis</i>	salt-seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 12073
<i>(h)ēduoinoi</i>	dealers in sweet wine	Xen. <i>Vect.</i> 5.3
<i>(h)ēniopoieion</i>	bridle-maker	Xen. <i>Mem.</i> 4.2.1, 8
<i>(h)etaira</i>	call-girl	Alexis fr. 103 K-A (= Ath. 13.568a); Alexis fr. 281 K-A; Alexis fr. 284 K-A (= Ath. Epist. I. 25f = Eubul. 133); Alexis fr. 255 K-A; Antiphanes fr. 2 (= Ath. 567d); Antiphanes fr. 210 (= Ath. 13.572a)
<i>(h)imatiopolis</i>	clothes-seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 11254
<i>(h)ippikos</i>	riding-trainer	Pl. <i>Ap.</i> 25b
<i>(h)uperetes</i>	assistant to architect	[Arist.] <i>Mag. Mor.</i> 1.34
<i>(h)upogram- mateus</i>	undersecretary	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 476.61–2, 268–69 (assistant to architect); <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1561.31–4
<i>(h)upodemato- poios</i>	sandal-maker	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1559.47–50; 1576.36–9 (for the distinction between <i>hupodema</i> and <i>hupodema koilon</i> see LSJ s.v.)
<i>(h)upodidaskalos</i>	assistant teacher	<i>IG</i> III(3) 34 (cf. Pl. <i>Ion</i> 536a)
<i>(h)upokrites</i>	reciter, declaimer, actor	<i>IG</i> III(3) 45a,b; Alexis fr. 43 (= Ath. 3.125b), Alexis fr. 140.13–16 K-A (= Ath. 4.164a–d)

<i>(h)uphantikos</i>	weaver	Pl. <i>Grg.</i> 449d; <i>Pbd.</i> 87b–c; Arist. <i>Pol.</i> 1.3.1256a6
<i>iatros</i>	doctor	Pl. passim; Men. <i>Aspis</i> 339–42
<i>ichthupoles</i>	fish-seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1570.87–9; 1576.13–14; Alexis fr. 57 K-A (= Ath. 3.104cd); Alexis fr. 130 K-A (= Ath. 6.226a); Alexis fr. 131 K-A (= Ath. 6.226b); Alexis fr. 204 K-A (= Ath. 6.225f); Antiphanes fr. 69.6–9 (= Ath. 8.358d); Antiphanes fr. 159 K-A (= Ath. 6.225d); Antiphanes fr. 164 K-A (= Ath. 6.224c); Antiphanes fr. 204.5–8 K-A (= Ath. 7.309d); Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 6.9
<i>imatiopolis</i>	see <i>(h)imatiopolis</i>	
<i>ippikos</i>	see <i>(h)ippikos</i>	
<i>kanabiourgos</i>	maker of <i>kanaboi</i> (frameworks, 'stick-figures')	<i>IG</i> III(3) 87a7
<i>kapelos/kapelis</i>	retail-salesperson	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1553.16–18, 26–8; 1554.22–5; 1557.47–50; 51–4; 1566.12–14; 1567.19–20; 1576.40–4; Ar. <i>Thesm.</i> 347–50; Pl. 435–6, 1120–2; <i>Pax</i> 1208–60
<i>karuo(-)</i>	nut-seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.10; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 11.4
<i>kelaustes</i>	rowing-master	Xen. <i>Oec.</i> 21.3; Xen. <i>Hell.</i> 5.1, 8.9; Ar. <i>Ach.</i> 554
<i>keporos</i>	gardener	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.6; Pl. <i>Minos</i> 316e; Theophr. <i>Hist. pl.</i> 7.2.5
<i>kerameus</i>	potter	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 620; 628; Ar. <i>Av.</i> 490
<i>keroplastes</i>	wax-worker	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 374.248–56; Pl. <i>Ti.</i> 74c
<i>kerux</i>	auctioneer or crier	Antiphanes fr. 247 (= Stob. 4.239); Dem. 44.4; 51.22; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 6.5
<i>kitharistes</i>	kithara-player	Xen. <i>Oec.</i> 17.7; Pl. <i>Prt.</i> 326a
<i>kitharodos</i>	one who plays the kithara and sings	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 666; 754; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1557.64–7; Alexis fr. 3 K-A (= Ath. 8.334c); Anaxippus fr. 6 K-A (= Ath. 4.169b)
<i>klinopoios</i>	furniture-maker	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1559.32–5; Dem. 27.9
<i>kollepos</i>	glue-boiler	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1558.10–13; Poll. 7.183
<i>kommotria</i>	hairstresser	Ar. <i>Eccl.</i> 737; Pl. <i>Resp.</i> 373c
<i>koprologos</i>	dung-collector	Ar. <i>Vesp.</i> 1184; [Arist.] <i>Ath. Pol.</i> 50.2



<i>kourens</i>	barber	Lys. 23.3; Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 337–41; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1559.78; Men. <i>Sam.</i> 510; Dem. 25.52; Pl. <i>Resp.</i> 373c; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 11.8
<i>kranopoios</i>	helmet-maker	<i>IG</i> III(3) 69.2; Ar. <i>Pax</i> 1255–9
<i>kreopoles</i>	butcher	Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 9.4
<i>krommuopoles</i>	onion-seller	Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 167
<i>kubernetes</i>	helmsman	Lys. 21.10; Pl. <i>Prt.</i> 344d; [Xen.] <i>Ath. Pol.</i> 1.2, 20; <i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 1032.156; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 13181
<i>kuminopoles</i>	cumin-seller	[Arist.] <i>Mag. Mor.</i> 2.7.26. (1206a27)
<i>lekithopoles</i>	pulse-seller	Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 426–8
<i>libanotopoles</i> , -polis	incense-seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1558.37–43; 1559.70–3; 1576.15–20
<i>linourgos</i>	flax/linen-worker	Alexis fr. 36 K-A (= Poll. 7.72)
<i>lithokopos</i>	stone-cutter	Dem. 47.65
<i>lithologos</i>	mason	Thuc. 6.44.1; 7.43; Xen. <i>Hell.</i> 4.4.18; Pl. <i>Leg.</i> 858b
<i>lithourgos</i>	stone-worker	Thuc. 5.82.6; Ar. <i>Av.</i> 1134; Isae. 5.44
<i>logographos</i>	speech-writer	Aeschin. 1.94; Pl. <i>Phdr.</i> 257c; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 17.8
<i>lophopoios</i>	maker of crests for helmets	Ar. <i>Pax</i> 545; Ar. fr. 850 K-A (= Poll. 7.157)
<i>luchnopoios</i>	lamp-maker	Ar. <i>Pax</i> 690; Andocides apud schol. Ar. <i>Vesp.</i> 1007
<i>luchnopoies</i>	lamp-seller	Ar. <i>Eq.</i> 739
<i>luropoios</i>	lyre-maker	Pl. <i>Euthydemus</i> 289b–d; <i>Cra.</i> 390b
<i>machairopoios</i>	knife-makers	Dem. 27.9; Ar. <i>Av.</i> 442 (cf. Poll. 7.156)
<i>mageiros</i>	cook	Ar. <i>Av.</i> 1637; Dem. 47.71; Pl. <i>Theages</i> 125c; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.2; 1555.21–2; 1570.36–8, 92–4
<i>maia</i>	midwife	Antiphanes fr. 157.6 (= Ath. 6.226c); Pl. <i>Tht.</i> 149a
<i>mechanopoios</i>	engineer	Xen. <i>Hell.</i> 2.4.27 (cf. Cyr. 6.1.22); Pl. <i>Grg.</i> 512b
<i>melitopoles</i>	honey-seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1570.72–5; Antiphanes fr. 123.4–6 (= Ath. 7.287d)
<i>metalleutes</i>	miner	Lys. fr. 89 Sauppe; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10051
<i>misthotos</i>	manual-labourer	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.8; 1557.23–8; 1561.18–21; 1672.28; Ar. <i>Av.</i> 1152

<i>molubdokopos</i>	lead-cutter	<i>IG</i> III(3) 100.11–13
<i>mulotbros</i>	millers	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10995; <i>IG</i> III(3) 68a.1–2; [Arist.] <i>Ath. Pol.</i> 51.3; Dem. 45.33; 53.14; Din. 1.23
<i>murepsos</i>	perfume-boiler	Theophr. <i>Hist. pl.</i> 4.2.6; <i>Caus. pl.</i> 6.14.11. [Arist.] <i>Mag. Mor.</i> 2.7.26 (1206a27)
<i>muropoles</i>	perfume-seller	Anaxandrides fr. 41 K-A; Antiphanes fr. 37 (= <i>Ath.</i> 15.690a); Lys. fr. 1.5; Xen. <i>Symp.</i> 2.4; Dem. 25.52; 34.13; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 11.8
<i>naukleros</i>	ship-owner	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 130.3–5; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 416.4–15; Ar. <i>Av.</i> 711; Dem. 18.194; 24.138; 32.1, 2, 8; 33.1, 2; 34.6, 9, 32, 33, 51; 35.36, 52, 53; 49.14, 15, 29, 40, 48; 50.6, 17; 56.10, 49; 58.10, 12
<i>naupegos</i>	ship-builder	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 117.4–7, 14–16; 236.9; 1032.164–5; [Xen.] <i>Ath. Pol.</i> 1.2; Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 513
<i>nautes</i>	ferryman	Ar. <i>Ran.</i> 138–41
<i>neurorrhaphos</i>	cobbler	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1558.14–17; Ar. <i>Eq.</i> 739; Pl. <i>Resp.</i> 421a
<i>obeliskopios</i>	skewer-maker	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 426.13
<i>obolostates</i>	lender of small amounts	Antiphanes fr. 166.3–8 K-A
<i>oikodemos</i>	housebuilder	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.5; Pl. <i>Prt.</i> 319b
<i>oinopoles</i>	wine-seller	Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 30.5
<i>onokomos</i>	ass-keeper	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.7
<i>onelates</i>	ass-driver	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 422.74–6, 206–7; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1558.20–3; 1559.96–7; Dem. 42.7
<i>orchestris</i>	dancing girl	Alexis fr. 172 K-A (= <i>Ath.</i> 10.441d); Ar. <i>Ach.</i> 1093.
<i>oreokomos</i>	muleteer	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.4; 1558.33–6, 47–8
<i>opsopios</i>	cook (of fine foods)	Alexis fr. 140.13–16 K-A; 153.6–14 K-A (= <i>Ath.</i> 9.379a); Pl. <i>Grg.</i> 517e; <i>Resp.</i> 373c
<i>ospriopoles</i>	pulse-seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1558.66–7
<i>paidotribes</i>	physical-trainer	Aeschin. 1.102; Pl. <i>Alc.</i> 107e; <i>Minos</i> 317; <i>Prt.</i> 326b
<i>pandokeus/ pandokeutria</i>	inn-keeper	Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 426–8; <i>Ran.</i> 114; Pl. <i>Leg.</i> 918b; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 6.5

<i>persikopoios</i>	maker of slippers	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 11689
<i>pharmakopoles</i>	druggist	Alexis fr. 115 (= Ath. 3.107a), fr. 116.g (= Ath. 6.254a), fr. 117 (= Ath. 8.340a), fr. 119 (= Ath. 678c); Ar. <i>Nub.</i> 767; Critias fr. 70D; Theopompus fr. 2 (Kock); Aeschin. 3.162
<i>pharmakotribes</i>	colour-grinder	Dem. 48.12–14
<i>phortegos</i>	trader	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1566.24–6; 1570.71–2
<i>plinthophoros</i>	brick-carrier	Ar. <i>Av.</i> 1134; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1672.28
<i>plinthourgos</i>	brick-maker	Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 514; Pl. <i>Tht.</i> 147a
<i>pluntes/pluneus/</i> <i>pluntria</i>	clothes-cleaner	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 794; <i>IG</i> I <sup>2</sup> 12373; 2934
<i>poikiltes</i>	embroiderer	Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 166, 514
<i>poimen</i>	shepherd	Aeschin. 1.97; Alexis fr. 329 (= Poll. 7.34)
<i>polodamnes</i>	horse-breaker	Dem. 47.52; Lys. 20.11; Men. <i>Epit.</i> 242–3, 255–6 Sandbach; Pl. <i>Resp.</i> 343a; <i>Tht.</i> 174d
<i>porthmeus</i>	ferryman	Xen. <i>Oec.</i> 13.7; <i>Eq.</i> 2.2, 3
<i>pornoboskos</i>	brothel-keeper	Aeschin. 3.158 (Herod. 1.25.3, 7)
		Men. <i>Epit.</i> 136 Sandbach; Aeschin. 3.246; Dem. 59.30; Ar. <i>Pax</i> 849; Hyp. <i>Against Athenogenes</i> 3; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 6.5; 20.10
<i> pornos/porne</i>	whore	Antiphanes fr. 293 (= Ath. <i>Epit.</i> 2.44a); Ar. <i>Ach.</i> 1090–1
<i>pristes</i>	sawyer	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 475.54–65, 261–2; 476.33–46; Pl. <i>Theages</i> 124b
<i>probatopoles</i>	sheep-seller	Ar. <i>Eq.</i> 132, 138
<i>prometretes</i>	surveyor	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1672.291; Din. fr. 16.4
<i>proreus</i>	keeper of stores on ship	Xen. <i>Oec.</i> 12.3; Pl. <i>Prt.</i> 3475; [Arist.] <i>Ath. Pol.</i> 502
<i>psaltria</i>	harp-player	Men. <i>Epit.</i> 476–7; [Arist.] <i>Ath. Pol.</i> 50.2
<i>rhaptēs</i>	clothes-mender	Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 513
<i>rhizopoles</i>	dealer in (medicinal) roots	Critias fr. 70d (= Poll. 7.196)
<i>rhizotomos</i>	one who gathers medicinal roots	Hippoc. <i>Ep.</i> 16; Theophr. <i>Hist. pl.</i> 9.1.7; 9.8.1; title of play by Sophocles
<i>sakchuphantes</i>	sack-maker	Dem. 48.12–13
<i>sesamopoles</i>	sesame-seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1554.40–3; 1561.22–5
<i>siderourgos</i> or -poles	iron-worker or -seller	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1558.22–5

<i>sindonopoles</i>	seller of fine cloth	<i>IG</i> III(3) 87.5
<i>sitopoios</i>	baker	Thuc. 6.22 (cf. 44.1); 2.78; Pl. <i>Grg.</i> 517e
<i>sitopoles</i>	grain-dealer	Lys. 22.1, 2, 6
<i>skapheus</i>	digger	Eur. <i>El.</i> 252; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 11202
<i>skenites</i>	one who keeps a stall or tentmaker	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1672.13, 171
<i>skenographos</i>	painter of scenery	Diog. Laert. 2.1.25
<i>skeupoios</i>	maker of equipment	Pl. <i>Criti.</i> 70d
<i>skeuopoles</i>	seller of equipment	Pl. <i>Criti.</i> 70d
<i>skulodepses</i>	tanner of hides	Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 514; <i>Av.</i> 490; <i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 646; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1556.33–5
<i>skutotomos</i>	leather-worker	Aeschin. 1.97; Ar. <i>Ecol.</i> 431–33; <i>Plut.</i> 160–62, 514; Pl. <i>Grg.</i> 490e, 491a; <i>Prt.</i> 319d; 323c; <i>Symp.</i> 191a; <i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 426.14, 24ff.; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1554.36–9; 1556.39–41; 1557.80–3; 1559.55–8; 1566.33–5; 1568.21–31; 1576.8–11; 1577.4; 1578.5–6; <i>IG</i> III(3) 12
<i>stephanopoios</i>	wreath/crown-maker	[Arist.] <i>Mag. Mor.</i> 2.7.26. (1206a27)
<i>stephanopolis</i>	wreath-seller	[Arist.] <i>Ath. Pol.</i> 14.4
<i>stuppeiopoies</i>	oakum, tow, hemp, flax-seller	Ar. <i>Eq.</i> 129; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1570.24–6
<i>subotes</i>	swineherd	Pl. <i>Resp.</i> 373c (Hdt. 2.47, 48; Hom. <i>Od.</i> 4.640, 14.420)
<i>surigopoios</i>	maker of pipes	<i>IG</i> III (3) 55a.1–4
<i>talasiourgos</i>	wool-worker	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1553.35–7; 1554.32–5, 48–51, 71–3; 1555.14–20; 1556.18–21; 1557.55–8, 76–9, 84–5, 95–6, 97–8, 102–3; 1558.1–4, 29–32, 53–4, 58–62, 68–70, 87–9; 1559.40–3, 74–6, 86–9, 93–5, 98–9; 1560.16–20, 21–5; 1567.7–8; 1570.15–17, 39–41, 48–50, 51–3, 66–8, 95–7; 1576.32–5, 61–2; 1577.2
<i>tamias</i>	keeper of stores on estate	Xen. <i>Oec.</i> 9.11
<i>tarichopoles</i>	dealer in salt-fish	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1557.68–71; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 6.9

<i>tekton</i>	craftsman, joiner	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 476.104–24; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 10B.3; Thuc. 5.82.6; 6.44.1; Ar. <i>Av.</i> 1154; <i>Pax</i> 296; <i>Plut.</i> 163
<i>thorakopoios</i>	maker of breastplates	Xen. <i>Mem.</i> 3.10.9; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1261.3
<i>titthe</i>	wet-nurse	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1559.59–62; 10843; 11647; 12387; 12559; Aeschin. 1.126; Dem. 47.55, 72, 81; Pl. <i>Resp.</i> 373c <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1554.68–70; Pl. <i>Alc.</i> 2.149e; Arist. <i>Eth. Nic.</i> 1121b34
<i>tokistes</i>	lender or usurer	
<i>torneutes</i>	turner (lathe)	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 475.259–60; <i>Plut. Per.</i> 12.6; Pl. <i>Criti.</i> 113d; <i>Theages</i> 124b
<i>trapezites</i>	banker	Dem. 21.215; 45.63; 36 passim; Dem. 49 passim; Din. 1.43; Theophr. <i>Char.</i> 21.12
<i>trapezopoios</i>	table attendant, one who lays out the table	Men. <i>Aspis</i> 232–3; <i>Sam.</i> 289–90
<i>trieraules</i>	flute-player for a trireme	Dem. 18.129 (slave)
<i>trochopoios</i>	wheel-maker, wheelwright	Ar. <i>Plut.</i> 513
<i>trophos</i>	nurse	Pl. <i>Prt.</i> 325c; <i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 12563
<i>trugetria</i>	one who gathers fruit	Dem. 57.45
<i>tuluphantes</i>	weaver of cushion- covers	Hyp. fr. 125 (= Poll. 7.191)
<i>turopoles</i>	cheese-seller	Ar. <i>Ran.</i> 1368–9; <i>Eq.</i> 854; Lys. 23.6–8; Men. <i>Pk.</i> 284, 290 Sandbach
<i>uperetes</i>	see ( <i>b</i> ) <i>uperetes</i>	
<i>upodematopoios</i>	see ( <i>b</i> ) <i>upodematopoios</i>	
<i>upogrammateus</i>	see ( <i>b</i> ) <i>upogrammateus</i>	
<i>upodidaskalos</i>	see ( <i>b</i> ) <i>upodidaskalos</i>	
<i>upokrites</i>	see ( <i>b</i> ) <i>upokrites</i>	
<i>xylourgos</i>	carpenter	<i>IG</i> I <sup>3</sup> 475.240–4
<i>zeugotrophos</i>	teamster	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> 1576.73–5; 1656.4–6; <i>Plut. Per.</i> 12.6
<i>zographos</i>	painter, artist	Anaxandrides fr. 14 (= Poll. 10.59); Anaxandrides fr. 34.1–2 (= Ath. 6.227b); Antiphanes fr. 98 (= Stob. 4.35.28); Antiphanes fr. 142.3 (= Ath. 6.258cd); Dem. 25.52; Pl. <i>Grg.</i> 448c, 453c

APPENDIX 2

Occupations Grouped by Sector

Food-Production (12)

*aipolos, balieus, ampelourgos, artokopos/artopoios/sitopoios, boukolos/  
boupchorbos, georgos, elaiologos, keporos, mulothros, poimen, subotes, trugetria*

Food-Retail (20)

*allantopoles, balopolis, alphitamoibos, artopoles, gelgopoles, elaiopoles, ichthyopoles,  
karuopoles, kreopoles, krommuopoles, kuminopoles, leitopoles, melitopoles, oinopoles,  
ospriopoles, probatopoles, sesamopoles, sitopoles, tarichopoles, turopoles*

Retail (18)

*anthrakopoles, belonopoles, bibliopoles, bursopoles, emporos\*, eiropoles, beduoinoi,  
himatiopolis, kapelos, libanotopolis, lychnopoles, muroples, rhizopoles, sindonopoles,  
skenites (?), skeuopoles, stuppeiopoles, charitopolis*

Clothing (17)

*akestria, amorgantinos, bapheus, bursodepses, gnapeus, gnaphallouphantes,  
eiropokos/erithos, linourgos, neurorrhaphos, poikiltes, rhaptēs, skulodepses, skutotomos,  
talasiourgos, hupodematopoios, huphantikos, pharmakotribes*

Building (17)

*architekton, ergolabos, kanabiourgos, kollepos, lithokopos/lithologos/lithourgos,  
misthotos/hyporgos, mechanopoios, naupegos\*, oikodomos, xulourgos, plinthourgos,  
plinthophoros, pristes, skapheus, skenites (?), tekton, torneutes hyperetes/  
hypogrammateus*

Metal-Working (14)

*argurokopos/arguropoios, aspidopegos, doruxos, drepanourgos, heniopoieion,  
thorakopoios, kranopoios, machairopoios, metallentes, molubdokopos, siderourgos,  
chalkeus, chrysochoos, chrusotes*

Transport (12)

*emporos\*, zeugotrophos, keleustes, kubernetes, naupegos\*, onokomos, onelates,  
oreokomos, polodamnes, proreus, trochopoios, phortegos*

Household Goods (14)

*angeiourgos, amphoreapoios, askopoios, kerameus, klinopoios, lychnopolos, murepsos,  
obeliskopoios, persikopoios, rhizotomos, sakchuphantes, stephanopoios, trapezopoios (?),  
tuluphantes*

Miscellaneous Services (23)

*aleiptria, balaneus, geometres/prometretes, grammateus, deiponopoios, epitropos, betairal/betaira, iatros, kerux, kommotria, koureus, koprologos, logographos, mageiros/opsopoios, maia, misthotos/huporgos, pandokeus, pluntes/pluntria, pornoboskos, skeopopoios, tamias, trapezopoios (?), trophos*

Finance (3)

*arguromoibos, obolostates/tokistes, trapezites*

Fuel (1)

*anthrakeus*

Plastic Arts (8)

*agalmatopoios/andriantopoios, grapheus, daktuliogluphos, daktuliopoios, engkautes, zographos, keroplastes, skenographos*

Performing Arts (6)

*auletes/auletris, kitharodos, kitharistes, orchestris, chorodidaskalos, psaltria*

Education (5)

*grammatistes, didaskalos, hippikos, paidotribes, hupodidaskalos*

\* = listed under more than one category

## AN UNPROFITABLE MASCULINITY

*Edward E. Cohen*

My aim in this chapter is to demonstrate how the Athenian concept of masculinity (*andreia*)<sup>1</sup> – by relegating household operation and ‘slavish’ business pursuits to women (and slaves) – deprived Athenian men of economic opportunity and business experience. Female and servile control of businesses and even, on occasion, of family wealth was a natural consequence of an *andreia* which valorized military, cultural and political pursuits, but feminized gainful employment.

### ‘Defective men’

At Athens, men’s belief in the natural superiority of the Greek male provided ideological justification for a male-dominated culture and for a gender-based segregation of human functions.<sup>2</sup> But a key aspect of the Athenian concept of masculinity (*andreia*) was ‘the obligation to maintain an independence of occupation . . . and at all costs to avoid seeming to work in a “slavish” way for another’ (Fisher 1998a: 70; similarly: Cartledge 1997: 148–9; Fisher 1993; cf. Lucian *Apologia* 10). Accordingly, Athenian men, although self-employed in a great variety of occupations, avoided work that required regular and repetitive service for a single employer on an ongoing basis over a continuing period – what we would term a ‘job’. Strengthened by an elite male idealization of leisurely dedication to cultural and social activities (Stocks 1936; de Ste. Croix 1981: 114–17; Fisher 1998b: 84–6), and exacerbated perhaps by the Athenians’ tendency to construe work not as an economic function but as a mechanism of self-definition (Vernant 1971: 2.17; cf. Schwimmer 1979; von Reden 1992; Loraux 1995: 44–58), this disdain for salaried employment prevented men from obtaining business experience and skills through employment outside their *oikos* (‘household’). As a result, businesses were largely dependent on the work and skills of household members; “‘firm” and private household’ became, in Moses Finley’s words, ‘one and the same’ (Finley 1999a: 69).



Although masculinity has traditionally been assumed to be recognizable only through polarized opposition to femininity,<sup>3</sup> studies of gender increasingly have shown that masculinity is also constructed through distinctions among men, differentiations that encourage males to avoid roles and behaviour inconsistent with an idealized masculinity.<sup>4</sup> At Athens – one of the few historically-attested societies dependent on slave labour<sup>5</sup> – male slaves were seen as ‘defective men’ (Todd 1997: 124): for free Athenians, *andreia* accordingly mandated rejection of every servile manifestation. In Aristotle’s (*Rh.* 1367a33) words, ‘the nature of the free man prevents his living under the control of another’.<sup>6</sup> Isokrates (14.48; *Arist. Rh.* 1367a30–32) equates hired employment (*thêteia*) with slavery. Isaeus (5.39; cf. *Dem.* 57.45) laments the free men compelled by a ‘lack of necessities’ to accept paid employment (Martini 1997: 49). Athens did have a labour market, but slaves constituted virtually all of those standing daily for hire at Kolonos Agoraios.<sup>7</sup> Receipt of a salary (*misthophoria*) was the hallmark of a slave: when the Athenian state required coin-testers and mint-workers for continuing service, legislation explicitly provided for the payment of *misthophoriai* to the skilled public slaves (*dêmosioi*) who provided these services on a regular basis (and for their punishment in the event of absenteeism) (*SEG* 26.72, lines 49–55; Figueira 1998: 536–47; Alessandri 1984; Stumpf 1986; cf. *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1492.137; 1388.61–2). Even lucrative managerial positions were disdained by free men: most supervisors accordingly were slaves,<sup>8</sup> even on large estates where high compensation had to be offered to motivate unfree but highly-skilled individuals (*Xen. Oec.* 12.3; 1.16–17). Thus, in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* (2.8), Sokrates proposes permanent employment as an estate supervisor to Eutheros, an impoverished free man. Such *epitropoi*, Sokrates notes, were well compensated (*Xen. Mem.* 2.6) for even routine services (*Xen. Mem.* 2.3). But Eutheros curtly rejects the suggestion: managing an employer’s property was only appropriate for a slave (*Xen. Mem.* 2.4; cf. 2.5).

Another factor inhibiting Athenian male involvement in business was a traditional ethic that condemned all commerce as inherently servile and insisted that farming alone provided a proper economic arena for the ‘free man’ (*anêr eleutheros*).<sup>9</sup> In fourth-century Athens, conservative opinion yearned for an earlier period when goods and services were provided, in Aristotle’s words, ‘naturally’ (*Arist. Pol.* 1258b1) through the self-sufficiency of farm-based households (*Arist. Pol.* 1258a19–b8; cf. 1256b10–22; *Rh.* 1381a21–4; [*Arist.*] *Oec.* 1343a25–b2), not through the ‘monied mode of acquisition’ (*chrêmatistikê krêtikê* [*technê*]),<sup>10</sup> a relatively recent phenomenon that separated production and exchange from manly *autarkeia* and linked them to profit (‘making money from one another’: *Arist. Pol.* 1258b1–4).<sup>11</sup> According to Lykurgos (*Lycurg. Leoc.* 108) and Hypereides (6.19), real Athenian men had, from ancestral times, preferred *andreia* to the acquisition of wealth (*ploutos*). For Plato (*Resp.* 371c), ‘market people’ (*agoraios anthrôpoi*) were ‘defective men’ (*phauloi*) who pursued monetary profit because they were incapable of more acceptable cultural and political pursuits (cf. *Pl. Prt.* 347c; *Plt.* 289e). Aristotle (*Pol.* 1291b14–30; cf.

1289b26–34) and Xenophon (*Hell.* 6.2.23) explicitly group the ‘commercial crowd’ (*agoraios okhlos*) with slaves and servants. By aristocratic standards, men involved in non-agrarian, that is, ‘banausic’ pursuits – production or trading of goods, labour for monetary compensation, even professional acting or musical performances – were unworthy of ‘citizenship’,<sup>12</sup> and many oligarchic states wisely and absolutely (according to Aristotle) prohibited *politai* from engaging actively in business (*chrēmatizesthai*: Arist. *Pol.* 1316b3–5; cf. Ober 1991: 125). Aristotle’s contemporary, Herakleides Pontikos (*Peri Hêdonês*, quoted at Ath. 512b4–6), even saw the avoidance of manual labour as the hallmark of *andreia*, separating ‘free men’ from slaves and persons of low birth.<sup>13</sup>

In the fourth century, however, many free residents of Attica did engage in commercial activities. Although state maintenance funds and paid public service offered a practical means to avoid employment arrangements considered demeaning,<sup>14</sup> numerous Athenians *were* self-employed in craft or trade,<sup>15</sup> and many others followed entrepreneurial pursuits.<sup>16</sup> Athenians were ‘fishermen, shopkeepers, market gardeners and small craftsmen’ (Humphreys 1978: 148), and pursued innumerable other specialized callings.<sup>17</sup> In many fields the same functions might be performed indiscriminately by slave workers or by free labour,<sup>18</sup> but service by free persons was usually for a single specific task or for a limited period of time and seldom exclusive to a single employer: we typically encounter Athenian businessmen working on their own for a variety of customers, or agents undertaking a limited task for an individual client.<sup>19</sup>

Yet many businesses (workshops, stores, banks, service businesses etc.) required repetitive service on a regular basis over an extended period of time.<sup>20</sup> For the staffing of these Athenian *ergasiai*, however, only slaves were available. In Lysias 24.6, an Athenian unable to work easily at his own business but too poor to buy a slave doesn’t even consider the possibility of hiring a free man to work for him: instead he pursues an option that some modern males might find insufficiently macho – he seeks public assistance.

As a result, many *douloi* (albeit in all probability a small minority of the unfree inhabitants of Attica) were able to acquire skills, to obtain business knowledge, to develop valuable contacts – and to prosper, at the expense of free males in thrall to *andreia*. But the slaves’ very importance entailed for their owners financial danger and/or financial accommodation. Overseers and managers often had detailed knowledge of household finance and sometimes controlled substantial assets: the slave Moschion, for example, enriched himself through his complete knowledge of Komon’s household affairs (Dem. 48.14–15); another *doulos*, Kittos, supposedly appropriated for himself and his confederates some 36,000 drachmas (Isoc. 17.11–12). To avoid the possibility of such losses (and for other reasons: Cohen 1998), masters sometimes chose to enter into arrangements under which slaves maintained their own households and operated their own businesses, while paying their owners fixed sums periodically. These *douloi kbôris oikountes* (‘slaves living independently’) often enjoyed – in the words of an Athenian observer – considerable prosperity, and

some even 'lived magnificently' (*megalorepôs diaitasthai*: [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.11). The *douloi* Xenon, Euphron, Euphraios and Kallistratos – while still enslaved<sup>21</sup> – as principals operated the largest bank in Athens, that of Pasion.<sup>22</sup> Pasion himself – while still unfree – had played a major role in his owners' bank (Dem. 36.43; cf. 36.46, 48), and thereafter in his own *trapeza*.<sup>23</sup> Phormion (who ultimately succeeded Pasion as Athens' most important financier)<sup>24</sup> – while still a slave – had been a partner in a maritime trading business.<sup>25</sup> Similarly the slave Lampis was the owner/operator (*nauklêros*) of a substantial commercial vessel: he entered into contracts with free persons (Dem. 34.5–10), lent substantial sums to customers (Dem. 34.6),<sup>26</sup> received repayment of large amounts on behalf of other lenders (Dem. 34.23, 31), even received the special exemption from taxes (*ateleia*) provided by Pairisades of Bosporos on the export of grain to Athens (cf. Hervagault and Mactoux 1974: 90–1; Perotti 1974: 52–4), and provided a deposition in the arbitration proceedings relating to an Athenian legal action (Dem. 34.18–19). Likewise Zenothemis, identified as a slave in Demosthenes 32, was actively engaged in maritime commerce and lending: allegedly the owner of a substantial commercial cargo, he litigated in his own name as a principal in the Athenian courts (Dem. 32.4).<sup>27</sup> (He is explicitly described as one of the *chôris oikountes* residing at Athens with his wife and children: Dem. 34.37). We also know, for further examples, of the charcoal-burner in Menander's *Epitrepontes* (378–80; cf. Biezunska-Malowist 1966: 65–72), a slave who lives outside the city with his wife and provides his owner with a portion of his earnings; the slave Aristarchos, a leather-worker who is listed on the Attic Stelai with an assortment of chattels that – in defiance of modern conceptualization – are described as belonging to the slave rather than to his master Adeimantos;<sup>28</sup> a group of nine or ten unfree leather-workers, whose leader paid their owner three obols for himself per day, two for each of the other slaves, and kept any remaining revenues (Aeschin. 1.97); a *doulos* who operated his master's business for a fixed payment and was free to retain any additional income after expenses (Milyas in Dem. 27); the slave in Hypereides 5 (*Against Athenogenes*) who operated a perfume business with substantial financing but whose only contact with his master was to provide him with a monthly accounting;<sup>29</sup> slaves operating their own businesses in the *agora* and personally liable for legal transgressions without reference to their masters (Stroud 1974: 181–2, lines 30–2); and numerous other slaves operating in similarly autonomous arrangements.<sup>30</sup>

But male slaves were not the exclusive beneficiaries of an *andreia* averse to commerce. Both Foucauldian discourse and feminist ideology anticipate a mutuality of advantage to persons – here women and slaves – similarly disadvantaged by male hierarchical hegemony,<sup>31</sup> and modern historians of ancient Athens have written extensively on this symbiosis.<sup>32</sup> And so it is not surprising that women – for male antiquity the defective sex (duBois 1988: 183) – joined slaves, Athens' defective men, in benefitting financially from the economically-defective Athenian male concept of *andreia*.

### ‘Defective women’

Scholars tend to view the Athenian *oikos* as ‘simply ‘the private sphere’ to which women’s activities were relegated’ (Foxhall 1994a: 138, disagrees with this tendency). For Murnaghan, for example, ‘outside is the only really desirable place to be’ (1988: 13). But, in contrast to modern Westernized societies with their focus on personal rights and obligations,<sup>33</sup> the *oikos* – and not the individual<sup>34</sup> – was the basic constituent element of Athenian society. Juridically, ‘the polis was an aggregation of *oikoi*’ (Wolff 1944: 93), with a legal system based on ‘the rights of families as corporate groups’.<sup>35</sup> ‘Since economic enterprises largely existed and were managed within the structure of households’ (Foxhall 1994a: 139), the ‘household’ even occupied a central position in Athenian economic life.<sup>36</sup> Ownership of property effectively came within the control of the *oikos*, and production of income, within its activities. And women’s central – sometimes dominating – position within the Athenian *oikos* offered women material and personal advantage – partly a result of *andreia*’s preference for non-economic pursuits.

Although in practice both men and women might personally use or alienate individual items of property such as money in their possession<sup>37</sup> or jewellery, clothing, tools or servants,<sup>38</sup> and individual men and women are sometimes referred to as though personally the owners of realty,<sup>39</sup> at Athens most wealth – especially ancestral property (*patrôia*) – belonged to the various *oikoi*.<sup>40</sup> The senior male in an *oikos*, often referred to as the *kyrios* (a term for which ‘there is really no modern expression’: Wolff 1944: 46–7, n.22), was not the ‘owner’ of family property, but rather the household representative or ‘steward’ (Hunter 1994: 12) in dealing publicly with household assets (cf. Schaps 1998a: 163–7). Thus it is the *oikos* itself that Isaeus (7.32, cf. 42) characterizes as undertaking the daunting liturgical services required of the few who qualified, by primacy of visible wealth, to shoulder those oppressive burdens of taxation and civic honour (liturgies) of which wealthy Athenians often complained.<sup>41</sup> It is likewise the *oikos* which bears the significant imposts on capital (the *eisphora* and *proeisphora*), the extraordinary levies that were imposed at intervals to provide funds for a specific undertaking such as a naval campaign.<sup>42</sup> Transfer of property through inheritance was effectuated exclusively through the *oikos*. Since men with legitimate children – probably the vast majority of adult males despite high infant mortality (Foxhall 1989: 29; cf. Ogden 1996: 157–63) – could not make testamentary dispositions of assets by will,<sup>43</sup> decedents’ successory arrangements were essentially only mechanisms by which the heirless *oikos* might arrange for the marriage of a female relative/household member, or adopt a male to serve as putative future *kyrios* (Thompson 1981; Hunter 1994: 9–13). There is no Athenian example of a testamentary disposition of *oikos* assets permanently outside the household.<sup>44</sup>

Since wealth belonged to the *oikos*, its waste by the household’s male representative (*kyrios*) was punishable by his full or partial loss of citizenship

rights.<sup>45</sup> Female members of the household on occasion objected openly to the sale of assets felt to be integral to an *oikos* (Aeschin. 1.99). But even incremental assets – fresh wealth (*epikîêta*) augmenting inherited property – were generally produced not by individuals but by and through the household (which was the physical location of virtually all *technai*,<sup>46</sup> the skilled activities of craft or trade that encompassed every profession, skilled callings, ‘manufacturing’ activities, and even financial businesses and operations).<sup>47</sup> Aischines (1.124) describes how a single house might be used successively as both a business-place and home by a doctor, a smith, a fuller, a carpenter – and a brothel-keeper. Even the permanent physical premises of banks – which required a secure venue for cash and other valuables – were generally co-extensive with the residence of the proprietor (where the continuous presence of members of the *oikos* presumably furnished additional protection).<sup>48</sup> Even in silver mining (where actual extraction was necessarily conducted on and within state-owned mineral-bearing properties), related business operations – ranging from those dependent on a single slave (as in Andoc. 1.38) through enterprises commanding an entire ore washery (Dem. 37) – functioned on a household basis: to protect the silver often present in the washing-rooms, homes at Thorikos (in the mining area of Attica) evidence special attention to security (Ellis Jones 1975: 121–2).

Merger of commerce and *oikos* was so complete that even the wealthiest entrepreneurs of fourth-century Attica – the bankers<sup>49</sup> – sought to ensure continuation of their banks (*trapezai*) by providing, on their deaths, for marriage of their widows to their chief slaves (to whom control of the banking business often devolved) (Dem. 36.28–9). Although marriage of a free member of a banking household to a slave or former slave was seen even by the Athenians as a special response to the business imperatives of financial operations (Dem. 36.30), the substantial involvement of wives in banking businesses was consonant with women’s widespread involvement in business activities at Athens – in retailing, crafts, and a variety of other callings.<sup>50</sup> As Foxhall has shown (1994a), following pioneering studies by Hunter, the presence within many *oikoi* of more than a single generation often resulted in the senior female member’s significant influence – sometimes even dominance. Late marriage for men (usually at about 30) encouraged prolonged male adolescence and dependence; early marriage for women (often shortly after puberty) meant early maturation – and most significantly, in many cases early widowhood. Hence, the Athenian phenomenon (described by Aischines 1.170) of numerous naive young men of wealth whose widowed mothers actively managed the family property (cf. Roy 1999: 8; Günther 1993). This phenomenon of the strong wife or widow is exemplified in the dominant familial influence of Kleoboule, mother of the Athenian leader, Demosthenes (Dem. 27 and related speeches; cf. Hunter 1989: 43–6; Foxhall 1996b: 144–7), and in the mother and wife of the wealthy and influential Lysias, who did not dare to bring his girl-friend, even chaperoned by her ‘mother,’ to his own house (Dem. 59.22)! Archippe (the widow of the

Athenian tycoon Pasion) dominated her *oikos*: she was intimately conversant with all aspects of the family's banking business (Dem. 36.14) and had such control over the bank's records that she was even accused of having destroyed them to prevent development of legal claims against Pasion's successor, her second husband Phormion (Dem. 36.18). Menander's (*Plokion* fr. 333–4 Koerte, 402–3 Kock) fictional Krobyle likewise controls her *oikos*: mistress of land, building, 'everything', she ejects from the house a servant girl who has annoyed her, leaving her husband to mutter his unhappiness at the power of his wealthy wife.

This is the context in which to view the frequent references to women's power and responsibility within the household (Dimakis 1998). According to Xenophon (*Oec.* 7.35–43, 9.14–17), the wife bore primary responsibility for managing the household.<sup>51</sup> In Euripides' words, 'women order households'.<sup>52</sup> Aristotle derides as 'absurd' Plato's suggestion that women and men, by analogy to animal life, can do the same work: human females, unlike their biological counterparts in lower orders, have households to run (Pl. *Resp.* 451d ff.; Arist. *Pol.* 1264b4–6)!

Men, for their part, had *andreia* which led them to emphasize political, social and military pursuits, and to appropriate the veneer of exclusive legal authority – *politeia* in public affairs, '*kyrieia*' in private matters. But the reality of women's extensive involvement in commerce effectively abrogated '*kyrieia*' as a barrier to female business operations, implicitly in the many large-scale transactions undertaken by women for their own account (Schaps 1979: 52–6; Hunter 1994: 19–29), explicitly in retail transactions where the law formally recognized women's right to contract, without male representation, in an unlimited number of reasonably significant individual transactions. The limit for a single commitment was the value of one *medimnos* of barley (often about US \$300 in purchasing power equivalence, but at times as much as \$1,500–\$2,000).<sup>53</sup> Some women were even described as *kyria heautēs* ('self-representative', that is, not dependent for legal purposes on a man).<sup>54</sup> For the business needs of *men* without *politeia* (free non-citizens and slaves – the majority of the male population),<sup>55</sup> the legal system also offered multifaceted accommodation. The law came to offer recognition of slaves' responsibility for their own business debts; court acceptance of slaves and free non-citizens as parties and witnesses in certain areas of commercial litigation (in contravention of the general rules allowing access to polis courts only to citizens of the polis); and acceptance of mercantile 'agency' as a mechanism to overcome remaining legal disabilities (Gernet 1955: 159–64; McKechnie 1989: 185; E. Cohen 1992: 94–101). But Athenian men – *pace* Aristophanes – did monopolize the making of public policy. To be sure, responsive to *andreia*'s militaristic dimension,<sup>56</sup> they used their control of public affairs to involve Athens in murderous, almost constant warfare. But such manifestations of *andreia* – by disrupting male economic endeavour and by depriving *oikoi* of the many men who were killed or maimed – only increased business dependence on women, slaves and foreigners.



When the enterpreneurial Diodotos of Lysias 32, for example, was mobilized for a military expedition, he provided his wife with business information, documents and cash. When he died shortly thereafter in the Athenian military disaster at Ephesos in 410/9, she was able to use her knowledge of the business and her control of records allegedly to challenge her male relative Diogeiton's efforts to usurp the family wealth.

Cowardice, however, not *andreia*, is the defining characteristic of Athenogenes, one of the protagonists in *Against Athenogenes* written by Hypereides (5) between 330 and 324 BCE.<sup>57</sup> This unique court presentation chronicles the only Athenian business 'deal' preserved in detail, the sale of a perfume operation for a total price, including assumption of debt, of approximately 42,000 drachmas (some millions of current US dollars, in purchasing power equivalence). In this speech, Epikrates, an Athenian citizen, claims that Athenogenes conspired with a manipulative female business-broker (Antigona) and a slave businessman (Midas) to induce him to assume the ruinous debts of a worthless perfumery operation – when all he wanted was sex with the slave businessman's son! The case offers confirmation of the model presented in this paper and an example of legal discourse as 'a key to understanding the collective mind-set of (a) society' (cf. Bruns 1992: 106–7; Todd 1993: 70; Rouland 1994: 129–30), here that of the hundreds of Athenian male jurors to whom Epikrates was appealing. Modern scholars generally characterize an Athenian court proceeding not as a search for truth but as a staged production in which the litigants construct personae with which the male jurors can identify and sympathize.<sup>58</sup> Epikrates does construct a clear self-image – that of a naïve farmer ripe for financial plucking (Hyp. 5.3, 26, 36) – a self-portrayal, of course, highly laudatory under Athenian concepts of *andreia*, albeit pitiful by the macho standards of Wall Street or the City. His adversaries – female, foreign, unfree – in contrast are characterized as highly capable in business: Athenogenes – Egyptian, market-savvy and knowledgeable of Athenian law and litigation (Hyp. 5.3); Antigona – a brilliant and manipulative businesswoman with deal-making expertise who skilfully 'cuts herself in' for a three hundred drachma brokerage commission (Hyp. 5.2, 3, 5, 18); the slave Midas, operating for his own account and able to obtain tens of thousands of drachmas in business credit (n.29). As presented by the hapless Epikrates, the hugely-successful Athenogenes – operator of a small chain of businesses – is an affront to *andreia*: instead of reporting for military service when Athens mobilized for Chaironeia (as Athenian law required of male metics) he instead fled to Troizen (where he prospered) and returned to Athens only in peacetime to separate Epikrates – Athenian farmer, soldier and business naïf – from his money (Hyp. 5.29). Once again the economic cost of *andreia* was not insubstantial, but what did that matter to the macho Athenian male? Or in the irresponsible aphorism of *andreia*, 'Who gives a damn?'<sup>59</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 The prime and literal meaning of *andreia* (and accordingly the first definition proffered by *LSJ*) is 'manliness,' i.e. 'the quality or state of having characteristics suitable for a man' (the Webster's English-language dictionary definition of 'masculinity'). However, extended and figurative uses of *andreia* are frequently encountered in surviving Greek literature.
- 2 See, for example, Xen. *Oec.* 7.23–5, 30. On sexual roles in the *Oikonomikos*, see Foucault 1990: 152–65; Saïd 1982: 99. Similar chauvinistic formulations are often cited as common to Mediterranean groupings, ancient and modern (see, e.g., Gilmore 1990), but cf. Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994: 27–9 and (for Greece) Vernant 1989; Georgoudi 1990.
- 3 For this postulate, see, for example, Kimmel 1987: 12; Seidler 1987: 88; Gilbert 1983: 423; Showalter 1985: 173. Ancient Greek theorists and modern historians of Greek antiquity proceed from the same assumption. See, for example, [Arist.] *Oec.* A.3.1; cf. Brisson 1986: 32–5; Olender 1978: 178.
- 4 See, for example, Segal 1990: ix–x; Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994: 19–26; Connell 1987: 167–90; Winkler 1990: 45–6.
- 5 A slave society or slave economy is generally defined as one in which the contribution of a huge number of unfree persons to the totality of wealth-production is so substantial that the society's overall production, distribution and consumption are highly dependent on slave labour. Finley identifies only five 'genuine slave societies' among the mass of known human groupings, including 'classical Greece and classical Italy' (Finley 1998a: 9; cf. Finley 1999a: 79). For Athens as a slave society, see Garlan 1988: 201–3; Fisher 1993: 3. (For Marx's characterization of the entire Greek world as a 'slave economy' [*Sklavenhaltergesellschaft*, *Sklavenhalterordnung*], see 1970–72: III.332, 384–85, 594–95). Cf. Mazza 1978.
- 6 Jameson (1997: 100) notes free persons' 'reluctance to admit to the need of working for someone else'. Cf. Humphreys 1993:10; Finley 1981c: 122.
- 7 Pherekrates, fr. 142 (K-A). See Fuks 1951: 171–3; Garlan 1980: 8–9. Marx believed that the formation of a labour market meant the introduction of 'wage slavery,' a precursor to classical capitalism (1970–72: I.170; cf. Lane 1991: 310–11). But this proposition is not confirmed by the Athenian labour market: 'nowhere in the sources do we hear of private establishments employing a staff of hired workers as their normal operation' (Finley 1981b: 262–3, n.6).
- 8 As employees, unfree labour fell into two categories: 'management slaves' (*epitropoi*) and workers (*ergatai*): [Arist.] *Oec.* A.5.1. Pace Humphreys 1978: 297, n.37 who refers to a 'free overseer,' the text of Menander's *Georgos* (46, 57) provides no information concerning the circumstances and conditions of service of the free youth working (*ergazetai*: line 47) at Kleainetos' farm.
- 9 Xen. *Oec.* 5.1; cf. Eur. *Or.* 917–22, *Supp.* 881–7; Pl. *Leg.* 889d; Men. fr. 338 (Körte/Thierfelder 1953); Ar. *Pax passim*, *Ach.* 32–6. See Hanson 1995: 214–19.
- 10 *Chrêmatistikê*, an adjective, is derived from the noun *chrêma* which carried a dual meaning of 'money' or of 'property' (goods, chattels, etc.) When applied to the fourth-century market, as in the Aristotelian phrase *bê chrêmatistikê ktêtikê* (*technê*) (Arist. *Pol.* 1256b40–1), the monetary notation is clearly present. Cf. Humphreys 1993: 12: '*chrêmatistikê*, the art of money-making.'
- 11 Aristotle recognizes the introduction of coinage as the precondition to the development of retail trade (*to kapêlikon*), but explicitly differentiates an earlier, 'simple' state of this trade from the profit-seeking, complex market activity existing in his own time (*Pol.* 1257b1–5).
- 12 On the virulent opposition to *banausia*, see, e.g., Arist. *Pol.* 1337b18–22;



- 1258b25–7, 33–9; 1260a41–b2; 1277a36–7; 1277b33–1278a13; 1277a32–b7; 1341b8–18. Cf. Humphreys 1978, esp. 148–9.
- 13 See Wehrli 1969: fr. 55. Cf., however, the allegation of slaves' *truphân* at Athens, [Xen.] *Atth. Pol.* 1.1 and below.
  - 14 The Athenian state offered paid service in the armed forces, and compensation for frequent jury duty and assembly meetings; for 'incapacitated' *politai* of limited means, there were outright public grants (Arist. *Atth. Pol.* 49.4; cf. Lys. 24).
  - 15 See Hopper 1979: 140; Finley 1981b: 99; Ehrenberg 1962: 162; Osborne 1995: 30; Harris, this volume. Antagonism to working under a master should not be confused with antipathy to labour itself: see Wood 1988: 126–45, esp. 139.
  - 16 See Thompson 1983; Garnsey 1980. For the significance of such activities in the ancient world, see Goody 1986: 177–84.
  - 17 For a survey of 'the extensive horizontal specialization in the Athenian economy', and the resultant profusion of discrete labour functions, see Harris 1999 and this volume.
  - 18 See Ehrenberg 1962: 183, 185. For parallel functioning by slave and free labour in the construction trades, see Randall 1953; Burford 1972; E. Cohen 2000: 187.
  - 19 Cf. the maritime entrepreneur who introduces a client to the bank of Herakleides in Dem. 33.7; Agyrhios who serves Pasion as a representative in litigational matters (Isoc. 17.31–2.; cf. Stroud 1998: 22, Strauss 1987: 142); Archestratos who provided the bond for Pasion (Isoc. 17.43); Stephanos' relationship with the banker Aristolochos at Dem. 45.64.
  - 20 For the complex commercialization of the fourth-century Athenian economy, see Shipton 1997. Cf. Theokhares 1983: 100–14; Kanellopoulos 1987: 19–22; Gofas 1994.
  - 21 They functioned pursuant to a leasing arrangement (*misthōsis*) with their masters that provided for a fixed rent: see Dem. 36.43, 46, 48; E. Cohen 1992: 76. Only on expiration of the lease did their owners καὶ ἐλευθέρους ἀφείσαν 'also set them free' (Dem. 36.14: 'enfranchised them,' see Harrison 1968: 175, n.2). On this phrase – standard Greek for manumission of slaves – see E. Cohen 2000: 121, n.21.
  - 22 Even Thompson, who sees banks as 'insignificant' in the Athenian economy, recognizes the significance of 'the lendable deposits (and) private resources of a tycoon like Pasion' (1979: 240).
  - 23 Although he was an important *trapezitês* by the 390s (Isoc. 17), Pasion was not then a *politês* (see Isoc. 17.33: use of Pythodoros the *politês* as his agent; Isoc. 17.41: his inclusion among the ξένοι εἰσφέροντες ('introduced/naturalized foreigners'). While it is generally assumed that he was manumitted prior to the events described in Isoc. 17 (cf. Davies 1971: 429–30), in fact we do not know when he obtained his freedom. His inclusion among the ξένοι εἰσφέροντες offers no evidence for his possible manumission: nothing is known of Athens' taxation of prosperous unfree inhabitants of Attica. Under the provisions of the grain-tax law discovered in the Athenian *agora* in 1986, bidding among potential tax-farmers was not limited to Athenian *politai* (see Stroud 1998: 64–6; cf. Langdon 1994). Slave entrepreneurs may therefore have been included among the *praiemenoi*.
  - 24 Dem. 36.4, 11, 37; 45. 31–2. Phormion's lease of Pasion's bank was entered into with Phormion (Dem. 36.4). In thus noting explicitly that Phormion had already obtained his freedom when he entered into operating leases giving him complete control of the bank and of a shield-workshop, the speaker necessarily implies that slave status would not have been a bar to entering into these substantial obligations: otherwise the mere fact of his being lessee of the businesses would have established his status as free.

- 25 See Dem. 49.31, where Timosthenes, active in overseas commerce, is characterized as Phormion's *koinônon* at a time when Phormion was still a *doulos*. (*Koinônon* is difficult to translate: see E. Cohen 1992: 76, n.71.) Davies 1971: 432 sees 'Phormion's later activity as a shipowner' as having its 'roots' in this earlier business involvement in maritime trade.
- 26 See Thompson 1980: 144–5. Although it is often categorically asserted that this Lampis cannot be the same person as his homonym, the maritime Lampis of Dem. 23, we have no independent information concerning either person, and their congruence cannot be ruled out (Todd 1993: 193, n.43).
- 27 A Massiliote, he borrowed money at Syracuse, claimed to have lent the funds against the security of maritime cargo, and litigated with other claimants to the collateral upon its arrival at Athens (Dem. 32.9).
- 28 *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 426.10–39; Pritchett, Amyx and Pippin 1953. The sales described in the Attic Stelai (*IG* I<sup>3</sup> 421–30) appear to have occurred between 415 and 413 BCE. See Halloff 1990; Langdon 1991: 70.
- 29 The considerable scale of the business is suggested by the colossal amount of debts incurred in its operation: five talents composed of both conventional (*chrea*) and *eranos* loans (Hyp. 5.7, 14, 19).
- 30 In addition to the testimonia cited in the text, see, e.g., Andoc. 1.38; Teles fr. 4.b (pp. 46–7 Hense); Theophr. *Char.* 30.15; [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.10–11 ['sans doute': Perotti (1974: 50, n.15)]; and the activities of slaves identified as *misthophorounta*, many of whom may have maintained their own *oikoi* ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.17; Xen. *Poroi* 4.14–15, 19, 23; Isae. 8.35; Dem. 53.21; Dem. 27.20–1; Dem. 28.12; Theophr. *Char.* 30.17. Dem. 59.31, although preserved in Athenian context, *stricto sensu* refers to a non-Athenian situation.
- 31 See Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 233; Foucault 1984: 381–2. Cf. Ackelsberg 1983, and Diamond and Quinby 1988: *passim*. In comedy, slaves, free women and children are portrayed as allies in contesting free adult male authority. See Humphreys 1993: 76, n.6.
- 32 See, for example, the Introduction (especially p. 5) and the various essays in Joshel and Murnaghan 1998; Vidal-Naquet 1981: 183.
- 33 For the differing ancient and modern approaches to individual status and rights, see Ostwald 1996 and the essays in H. Jones 1998.
- 34 Morris 1987: 3: in ancient Greece 'there were no natural rights of the individual'. Cf. Miller 1974, 1995, *passim*.
- 35 Todd 1993: 206. Cf. Roy 1999: 1; Hansen 1997: 10–12. The primacy of the *oikos* is the literal starting point for the two standard treatments of Athenian substantive law (Beauchet 1969: 1.3 and Harrison 1968: 1). Todd 1993: 208–11, 225–7 sets out the substantial difficulties inherent in MacDowell's (1989) rejection of the *opinio communis*.
- 36 See Arist. *Pol.* 1252; Xen. *Oec.*, esp. 1.5, 6.4; Lys. 1 and 32. Cf. Ledl 1907–8; Lacey 1968: 88–90; Fisher 1976: 2, 5 ff.; Hunter 1981: 15; Lotze 1981: 169; Hallett 1984: 72–6; Sealey 1984: 112; Sissa 1986; Foxhall 1989; 1994a; 1994b; 1996b: 140–52; Jameson 1990: 179; C. Patterson 1990: 43–4, 51, 55–7, 59; 1981: 9–10; Todd 1993: 206; Strauss 1993: 35, 43; Ogden 1996: 42; Cox 1998: 13. Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 113 notes the *oikos* to be 'the basic economic unit of the polis' but finds 'some ambiguity as to the extent to which the basic social unit is the *oikos* or the individual'.
- 37 Archippe, for example, the wife successively of the Athenian banking tycoons (and former slaves) Pasion and Phormion, seems clearly to have had monetary assets fully recognized, in legal context, as her own: Apollodoros is accused in court of seeking 3,000 drachmas from her estate 'in addition to the 2,000 drachmas which she had given to Phormion's children' (Dem. 36.14). Cf. the four

- talents in cash attributed to Kleoboule (Dem. 27.53, 55; 28.47–8), the substantial resources controlled by the wife of Polyuktos (Dem. 41), and the loan transactions engaged in by Hyperbolos' mother (according to Ar. *Thesm.* 839–45).
- 38 Pasion in his will 'gives to Archippe as dowry one talent from Peparethos, another talent here at Athens, a *synoikia* (multiple dwelling-house) worth 100 minas, female slaves, gold jewellery, and the other items of hers which are inside (the house)' (Dem. 45.28). Cf. Dem. 36.8; Finley 1985c: 192, no. 175A (house [*oikia*] in the centre of Athens given to a woman as dowry). For the legal and economic issues relating to such dispositions, see Whitehead 1986b; Carey 1991; E. Cohen 1992: 101–10.
- 39 For 'ownership' by females, see SEG 12.100, lines 67–71 (field bordering on silver mine listed in fourth-century records of the *polîtai* as belonging to 'the wife of Charmylos') and Finley 1985c: 192 (175A [Fine 7] ('not a security transaction' according to Finley). Pasion leaves a multiple-residence building to Archippe (n.38), and a woman is reported on a fragmentary *horos*-inscription as one of the lenders in a real-estate financing (Fine 1951: no. 28; cf. Finley 1985c: 188). Harris sees this arrangement as providing a mechanism for women in business effectively to own real property by foreclosing, through a male 'straw party,' on pledged real-estate (1992: 319). 'This *horos* demonstrates that women's role in financial matters was potentially much more extensive than the evidence of Athenian law would lead us to assume' (Harris 1992: 311).
- 40 Isae. fr. 8, 6.25. Cf. Lys. 19.37; Dem. 39.6, 35. See Harrison 1968: 233; Asheri 1963: 1–4; Foxhall 1989, 1994b.
- 41 For the functions of the *triêrarkhoi* or the *lêitourgountes* as psychologically and financially equivalent to the payment of fiscal imposts by 'taxpayers,' see Arist. *Pol.* 1291a33–34; [Xen.], *Ath. Pol.* 1.13; Dem. 21.151, 153, 208; Isoc. 8.128; Lys. 27.9–10. Cf. Davies 1971: xx.
- 42 On the *eisphora* system, see Thomsen 1964; Gera 1975: 31–84; Brun 1983: 3–73; Gabrielsen 1994, esp. 184 ff. For imposition of the tax on metics as well as 'citizens,' see IG II–III. 244.26 and the fragment from Hypereides preserved at Poll. 8.144. Cf. Whitehead 1977: 78–80, 1986a: 146. There is some evidence for annual imposition of the *eisphora* from 347/6 to 323/2 (Thomsen 1964: 239–43).
- 43 Men with legitimate sons (*paides gnêsioi arrenes*) could make no arrangements whatsoever (Dem. 46.14; 20.102; 44.49; 44.67; Isae. 3.1, 6, 9, 29; cf. Lane Fox 1985: 224–5; de Ste. Croix 1970: 389–90). Complex legal regulations controlled dispositions by those whose only direct heirs were daughters (*epiklêroi*): see Harrison 1968: 309–12; Todd 1993: 226–31.
- 44 Thus Demosthenes' father grants Therippides only the *use* of a sum of money in gratitude for his anticipated services (Dem. 27.5), not the outright bequest that might have otherwise been expected (Thompson 1981: 18). At Lys. 19.39, Timotheos is said to have bequeathed some money for religious purposes, but the speaker emphasizes that this will was made in Cyprus, outside Athenian jurisdiction. Cf. Isae. 3.45–51; Men. *Dys.* 729–39; Harp., s.v. *notheia*; Suda, s.v. *epikleros*; Schol. Ar. *Av.* 1655–6. See generally Gernet 1955: 121–49; Harrison 1968: 143–9; Paoli 1976: 559–70.
- 45 See Aeschin. 1.154. Transfer of assets into non-visible form (to evade taxes or avoid creditors, for example) carried the risk of adversaries' charges of 'waste' of an estate. Cf. Aeschin. 1.101.
- 46 See, for example, Xen. *Oec.* 9; Ar. *Thesm.* 415–20; Men. *Sam.* 234–6. Jameson 1990: 184–7 surveys both archaeological and literary evidence for work at home. Cf. Ellis Jones 1975: 68–71; Thompson and Wycherley 1972: 173–85.
- 47 Thus *technai* include pursuits as varied as medicine, food-making and catering,

- architecture, metal-working, production of beds and of swords, and banking. See Pollux' listing of *technai* (esp. 7.170, 7.155 and 7.159: cf. 4.7, 22); Xen. *Oec.* 1.1; Dem. 27.9, 45.71.
- 48 For the bank of Pasion, see Dem. 49.22; 52.8; 52.14. Since residences even of persons having no connection with the banking business often encompassed substantial security features (Young 1956: 122–46; Pečirka 1973: 123–8; Osborne 1985a: 31–4, 63–7), valuables and documents were likely to have been no less secure in such private residences than in separate business edifices.
- 49 For the wealth of bankers (*trapezitai*), see, e.g., Isoc. 17.2, Dem. 36.4–6, 36.57 (regarding the banker Phormion), Dem. 45.72. Cf. E. Cohen 1992: 22, 65–6, 88–90; Thompson 1983.
- 50 For the ubiquity of female commercial activity at Athens, see Herfst 1922; D. Cohen 1990: 156–7; Brock 1994.
- 51 Her control of the domestic slaves made her a veritable queen (*bôspēr basilissan*: Xen. *Oec.* 9.15).
- 52 '... nor in the absence of a woman is even the prosperous household well provided for.' Eur. *Mel. Des.* fr. 660 Mette 1982, lines 9–11 (P. Berl. 9772 and P. Oxy. 1176 fr. 39, Col. 11) (fr. 13: Auffret 1987). Cf. Todd 1993: 204–6.
- 53 Isae. 10.10; cf. Aeschin. 1.18. One *medimnos* of barley often cost about three drachmas, but at times rose to as much as 18. This was more than sufficient to meet normal retail requirements: Kuenen-Janssens 1941: 212; Foxhall and Forbes 1982: 86; Hunter 1989a: 294; Dimakis 1994: 33, 329, n.77.
- 54 Men. *Pk.* 497; Xen. *Mem.* 3.11; Dem. 59.45–6; Antiphanes fr. 210 (K-A.). Other examples in Bremmer 1985; Hunter 1989b. The number of such 'female heads of household' is impossible to determine (Hunter 1994:33).
- 55 A census (Ath. 272c) conducted between 317 and 307 BCE reported resident foreigners as about half the number of citizens, and a higher proportion if unregistered alien residents and transients are added (Hansen 1991: 93). Since the metic population was more variable in number than the citizen body (Xen. *Poroi* 2.1–7; Isoc. 8.21; Lévy 1988: 54), the percentage of free foreigners in the earlier (and more prosperous) decades of the fourth century may have been even greater: Thür 1989: 118 estimates the metic population for this period at about 100,000. The number of slaves was also very large: the Athenians believed that the servile population exceeded that of the free (Isager and Hansen 1975: 16–17; cf. Garnsey 1980: 1). From a male citizen body which he estimates at 30,000, Hansen extrapolates a total population of 300,000 or more (1991: 93–4).
- 56 *Andreia* as adult males' display of battlefield bravery: Lycurg. 1.104; Hyp. 6.19; Ar. *Nub.* 510, *Ran.* 372–80 (humorously). Cf. Dover 1974: 165–7; Wheeler 1991: 138; my n. 1 above.
- 57 For the date see Hyp. 5.31: Alexander's decree of 324, restoring Greek exiles to their native cities, had not yet been issued; the Troizenian cooperation with Athens in 480 is referred to as having occurred more than 150 years earlier.
- 58 'The Athenian law courts were a public stage upon which private enmities were played out' (Osborne 1985b: 52). Cf. Scafuro 1997: 64 (with specific reference to Hyp. 5 *Against Athenogenes*); Humphreys 1983: 248; 1985; Biscardi 1970. On the relationship between forensic rhetoric and forensic 'truth', see Johnstone 1999: 70–92, 164 n.99.
- 59 Literally: 'What does Hippokleides care?', the response of a prominent Athenian male after his flippant behaviour cost him a fortune. Hence (Herodotos 6.130 reports) the Athenian proverb: οὐ φροντὶς Ἱπποκλείη'.

# MARKETS, FAIRS AND MONETARY LOANS

Cultural history and economic history in  
Roman Italy and Hellenistic Greece

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## I

Current debates on the relationship between cultural history and economic history, as illustrated by the KERDOS colloquium, seem to me to pose three questions above all. I shall begin this article by a succinct presentation of them and shall state, in outline, the replies I am inclined to make. Then, I shall examine several specific situations or institutions of an economic character in the Roman world of the late Republican and Imperial periods. My subject matter will be periodic markets (section II), fairs (section III) and monetary loans (section IV). I have chosen these because in my view they bear closely on the three questions I have just alluded to. Studying them will, I hope, help me to fill out in detail the responses that I shall sketch at the outset.

The first question is this: given the state of the available documentation and the strongly rhetorical character of ancient literary texts, is it possible to go beyond the ancients' own representations of and commonplaces about their conception of the economy and, more generally, of private, individual activity? To cite one recent opinion, Ian Morris (1994a: 351–2) in a review article wrote that all the new cultural historians 'agree that when ancient authors discuss "economic" issues they are manipulating evocative symbols within performative contexts, constructing images of themselves and others'. Addressing the KERDOS colloquium Morris summarized this cultural vision of the ancient economy as follows: 'social and economic structures disappear from sight. We can only operate with competing representations of them in elite efforts to fashion palatable images of themselves.'

Certainly, the study of representations holds a privileged position in ancient history on account of the nature of the evidence, but unlike Ian Morris I think

it is possible to perceive, alongside the representations and in a certain sense beyond them, at least some aspects of the sociological structures. Even if the Attic orators, for example, do not deal with the economy as such, but have as their aim 'manipulating concepts – banks, maritime loans, the mines, and so on . . .' (Morris 1994a: 357), these concepts exist only because the institutions themselves also existed, and because the orators were able to construct a more or less precise image of their function, especially their economic function.

My second question goes like this: is it worth the effort to try to go beyond these representations? Do economic and social structures hold any historical interest? I cannot of course attempt to answer the question in those very general terms, but what of the relevant structures of Graeco-Roman antiquity specifically? For a very long time now a number of specialists in the history of Greece and Rome have held that, although the ideas of the economy and of economic history are well grounded in principle, they are just not worth the effort of applying in practice to the ancient world. They do not state outright that it is not possible to go beyond ancient representations of, thoughts about, or reactions to the economy, but they judge that a cultural-historical approach yields a superior understanding of Greek and Roman civilization. If I have understood it correctly, this is pretty much the position of Leslie Kurke (1991). As far as I am concerned, though, a just interpretation of cultural representations such as those transmitted by an author like Pindar demands that they be set against the practical and material facts – whether they be political, technical, or economic facts, or, as the case may be, facts of the kinship system. If Kurke's book is a success, it is so, in my view, because she has taken into account not only the textual and cultural context but also the civic background, the political and social structures, what one might call the 'hard facts of life'.

My third and final question is as follows: what should the object of our research be – to understand whole structures in their totality, or to direct our attention rather towards individual strategies, towards a psychology of economic activity, on the grounds that these are particularly likely to reflect the general character of ancient societies? Are we, indeed, absolutely required to choose this second route rather than the other? This is a problem that has been posed long since, and with a particular sharpness, in relation to late Republican and Imperial Rome. For the works of the first century BCE, above all those of Cicero, do steer one pre-eminently towards a prosopography of the senatorial elite and to the individual choices of particular members of this elite, who are much better known than the rest. In the case of the Empire, the structure of the Roman administration and the availability of inscriptions detailing senatorial and equestrian careers do once again reinforce the tendency to study individual careers, independently of sociological structures. For example, in matters of private finance scholarly attention is often focused upon individual cases of enrichment and social advancement, which are the outcome obviously of cupidity and the desire to elevate oneself socially.

To which I would add two comments. On the one hand, personal enrichment,



cupidity, self-elevation and all the individual strategies adopted in pursuit of those goals are also historically determined and variable subjects (in which historians of modern and contemporary societies have shown themselves more and more interested). On the other hand, in exploring an individual strategy one can try also to discern the sociological structure. For no strategy can ever be defined except in terms of the structures which the social actors themselves analyse and apprehend intuitively. It is this idea that I shall attempt to illustrate in the penultimate section of this article (section IV), by way of texts relating to Cicero's borrowings and loans.

There are further questions that have been posed within the framework of debates over cultural history. One of them, for instance, bears on the role of the State – by which I mean first the Greek or Roman city, then the Hellenistic kingdoms, and finally the Roman Empire. Did not State intervention and State financial arrangements take precedence over private economy? Did they not indeed predominate to such an extent as to render private economy negligible? This problem is particularly acute for Rome, by reason of the size to which the State grew as a result of conquest, and because of the nature of the available evidence, for example in the sphere of epigraphy. My initial reply would be that both the public and the private sectors must be studied simultaneously, and that, if the public sector is shown to be dominant (which actually is not certain), we are still dealing with a form of economic enterprise. Foundations of colonies, distributions of land to veterans, adjudications of tax-burdens or levies of arms, and so on, all these comprise economic aspects, even if such operations are carried out by the city or by the Empire.

The KERDOS colloquium raised also the question of the relationship between production, exchange and consumption. So far as antiquity is concerned, ought we to be concerning ourselves with production, or rather with exchange? But circulation of goods, exchange of goods and services, and even consumption behaviour are all part of the economy. Besides, the documentation drives us constantly to move on from exchange to production, and from production back to exchange.

The last two problems raised – the role of the State, and the relationship between production and exchange – are not relevant to the possibility of an economic or sociologizing history as such. They bear on the content of such a history. They cannot therefore, logically, serve as objections to its validity. I shall allude to these matters later on, because Cicero's debts invite a State-side perspective, and the fairs and markets involve commerce and exchange; but I shall not specially emphasize them. It is rather the three preceding questions that will preoccupy me above all.

## II

My first case-study is the periodic markets, called *nundinae* at Rome, in Italy and in the western part of the Empire (De Ligt 1993; Frayn 1993). At Rome

these *nundinae* were considered to have been instituted in the regal period. Traditionally they were held every nine days, that is to say, after the lapse of a period of eight full days.<sup>1</sup> Under the Principate lists of markets were posted up in certain towns. Some of these *indices nundinarii* have survived, and from them we learn the identity of certain of the towns of Latium and Campania where markets of this type were held.

The Latin and Greek texts that mention *nundinae* in a general way emphasize incessantly that they afforded an opportunity for the city's rural inhabitants (*rustici*) to come into the urban centre to buy and sell. Cicero, for example, in one of his Rullan speeches of 63 BCE (*Leg. agr.* 2.89), recalls how the Romans of old viewed the Campanian town of Capua, as, among other things, the site of the peasants' periodic market (*nundinae rusticorum*). Varro (*Rust. Prooem.* 1) and Columella (*Rust.* 1 Praef. 18) each write that the *rustici* worked the land for seven whole days and on the eighth repaired to Rome. Seneca (*Ep.* 86.12) went even further: according to him, people didn't wash themselves except on one day in every eight, namely market-day. Several texts stress the political role of the *nundinae*. For example, Macrobius, quoting P. Rutilius Rufus, writes in his *Saturnalia* (1.16.34; cf. 1. 16.28–36) that it was at the *nundinae* that country people learned of bills being proposed, since they had to be posted up for three successive *nundinae*, and as a result the polls would attract greater interest. But as soon as the economic role of the *nundinae* was under discussion, they are presented without exception as the peasants' market, at their origins no less than during the late Republic and Imperial period (cf. Festus *de Verb. Sign.* 176 and 177L; Servius *Georg.* 1. 275).

Other texts, while alluding to specific and concrete cases of the author's own day, present them in a fashion wholly compatible with this traditional representation. Columella (*Rust.* 1.8.6; 11.1.23), for example, recommends that the estate manager (*vilicus*) should leave his estate as infrequently as possible, and attend the *nundinae* only if it's absolutely unavoidable, his thinking being that the periodic market was the place where the peasants habitually gathered. The Elder Pliny (*HN.* 8.208) speaks at the same period of the champion porkers leading their porcine fellows to the periodic markets. Under the Principate a great landed proprietor might demand that a periodic market be established on his lands, which presupposes that a market of that kind would have a markedly rural character and permit peasants to exchange their respective products (e.g., Suet. *Claud.* 12.2; Plin., *Ep.* 5.4, 13).

We may leave to one side those texts (e.g., Cic. *Att.* IV.3.4; 17.4) in which *nundinae* designates a day without reference to its market, and especially those (Pliny *HN* 28.28; Suet. *Aug.* 92.2) which concern the superstitions associated with *nundinae*. The majority of the ancient texts impose a very 'peasant' construction on the periodic markets, as the place where the *rustici* of a city or of a *pagus* (village) got together to buy and sell their products. This representation implies the practice within the confines of a single city of numerous transactions involving agricultural products (so, rightly, De Ligt 1993: e.g.,



106–17). Archaic as that may seem, it certainly does not support the hypothesis of peasant self-sufficiency, since it shows that the *rustici* needed to exchange among themselves in this way.

However, despite the sources' insistent repetition of this standard representation, it is possible to offer an alternative economic interpretation of the *nundinae*. The remainder of the documentation allows us to pick up here and there scraps of social and economic history that are at odds with it. These consist, partly, of anecdotal literary texts, and in part of epigraphical and archaeological data.

One alternative image of the *nundinae* in the late Republic and under the Principate that these documents suggest to us is that of markets in which the elite too had an interest, and not just the municipal elite but even *equites* and senators. These are markets where the elite went to make purchases, including even of goods of high economic value such as slaves, land, or houses (for example through auction sales). Another alternative image provided is that of markets in which professional traders participated. From outside the city these traders brought merchandise including goods from overseas, and they took away agricultural products destined in part for the provisioning of the city of Rome.

Inscribed tablets involving over a hundred transactions were discovered in the nineteenth century at Pompeii. They were the property of a moneychanger-banker by the name of Lucius Caecilius Iucundus, who lived at Pompeii during the Julio-Claudian era. Almost all of them are receipts for auction sales, which were held during the 50s CE (Andreau 1974, 1999; Jongman 1991). Other such tablets, found near Pompeii at Murecine, relate to transactions effected at Puteoli between the 20s and the early 60s CE (Camodeca 1992, 1999). The very rare indications of the dates of auction sales and *nundinae* provided by these tablets and some other inscriptions reveal that at Pompeii auction sales took place on the day of the *nundinae* (Andreau 1976).

Now, it is known, thanks to these inscribed tablets and to literary texts, that certain traders made a habit of attending these auction sales, and that members of the elite, certainly the municipal elite but even senators and *equites*, would also take an interest in them, as sellers no less than as buyers. One of the Iucundus tablets at Pompeii concerns a sale of a quantity of flax: this had been brought from Egypt by a non-Roman foreigner (*peregrinus*), a certain Ptolemaeus of Alexandria, who had arrived by way of the port of Puteoli to auction it at Pompeii. A passage of Suetonius (*Ner.* 32.4) is no less enlightening. The emperor Nero, he says, forbade the use of violet or purple dyes and, in order to raise cash (apparently), ordered them to be sold on the day of the *nundinae* by one of his entourage, with a view to securing the conviction thereby of any traders (*negotiatores*) who had agreed to buy them. That confirms, just like the Iucundus tablet, that wholesale merchants, *negotiatores*, did indeed participate in the *nundinae*.

Study of inscribed texts which bear the names of moneychangers, bankers, public heralds and merchants corroborates the hypothesis that agricultural products destined for the provisioning of the city of Rome passed in transit

through towns where *nundinae* were held, and that certain of them were auctioned there (e.g., Andreau 1974, 1984, 1987). Periodic markets therefore had a commercial role to play, and not all the products on sale there were local. F. Coarelli's (1981, 1991, 1996) excavations at Fregellae have revealed the presence there in the second century BCE of textile workshops. Very probably at least part of the products of these workshops was sold in Rome, whither Coarelli thinks they may have been conveyed *via* the Liri valley and the port of Minturnae – a suggestion consistent with the names of the towns listed on one of the extant *indices nundinarii* (*Inscr. Ital.* XIII.2, no. 49).

Members of the elite too, as we have said, attended *nundinae* and took part in auction sales (in cases where these were held). Cicero, for example, explained in a letter to his brother Quintus (*Q Fr.* 3.1.3) that he had bought for him, and in accordance with his instructions, a property costing 101,000 HS (the so-called *fundus Fufidianus*). The sale was made at Arpinum, on the day of the *nundinae*, and the sum indicated in the text is very probably precise – the odd 1000 sesterces would represent the one per cent commission of either the public herald (stated by Cic. *Rab. Post.* 11.30 to be levied at that rate) or the collector (*coactor*). Apuleius, for his part (*Flor.* 9.26), tells how he was in the habit of buying his scrapers (*strigiles*) and other bathtime accessories at the periodic market. True, the objects sold are in this second case very modest, but the purchaser belonged to the urban elite and was therefore no *rusticus*.

These *nundinae* of Roman Italy provide therefore an excellent illustration for our present discussion. For the representations of them elaborated by the Latin literary tradition are repeated, insistently, by the majority of the literary texts. On the other hand, there is some other evidence which allows us to detect a certain gap between these literary representations and the material reality of the periodic markets – above all, some documentary texts and some archaeological data. The literary texts in question often are more private in character than the rest: the correspondence of Cicero, for example, or comic, parodic or satirical texts that go into the ordinary details of everyday life for their readers (or public). These indicate the existence of at least two aspects of these markets that are passed over by the textual tradition.

It remains to ask why this gap between the literary representations and the material reality of the *nundinae* came into being. Their rural origins mattered to the Latins since they touched on the very social and ideological foundations of the city – above all the city of Rome, of course, but all the cities of the Empire too – as they imagined them to be. They affected the relations between the city's urban centre and its rural territory, relations between the elite and the peasantry (both small proprietors and those who owned no land at all), and the constantly reaffirmed importance of agriculture.

That is part of the answer. Another part involves the fact that, as we have seen, it wasn't only peasants who frequented the *nundinae* of the first century BCE or the first century CE. It is probable that the largest transactions conducted there did not involve peasants, although we simply do not know the relative

importance of the various types of transactions. At all events, when Cicero attended the *nundinae* at Arpinum, he had no choice but to rub shoulders with many peasants, many more than he would encounter in other places he frequented – apart from his own estates! The mythical vision he had of the *nundinae*, of their being as they were when founded notionally by Romulus or Servius Tullius, was not entirely in contradiction to his lived experience. It was not therefore astonishing that Varro, Columella, Seneca or he himself should have perpetuated these archaizing representations – which indeed we find still alive in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius (c. 400 CE).

Finally, before leaving the *nundinae*, which were a site of exchange, it is worth remarking how often I have been led to talk of production, and of the products of the estates of large landowners as well as of small peasant farmers.

### III

I move on next to fairs, which I shall discuss from a primarily historiographical point of view. My aim here is to illustrate through their example just how inconvenient the absence of a history of economic and social structures can be.

The fair is to be distinguished from the periodic market more by its rhythm than by its importance; some fairs were actually very small beer. If we adopt De Ligt's (1993: 14) definition, a fair is a 'low-frequency commercial gathering held at regularly spaced intervals and involving the distribution of merchandise not destined for consumption on the spot'. 'Low-frequency' means once or twice a year, whereas a periodic market was held at least once a month.

In the first half of the twentieth century the bibliography on the geography of fairs was largely but not entirely unknown to specialist ancient historians. Thus, a long article of André Allix written in the 1920s, which remained for a long time the only attempt at a synthetic reflection upon the entirety of historically attested fairs, was cited by certain ancient historians as well as by Brian Berry (1967) in his book on markets and retail distribution. Despite that, however, throughout almost the whole century it was the history of medieval fairs which impacted most on the history of ancient fairs, and in a negative way – up until De Ligt's (1993) book. This is a rare example of the influence over or even domination of ancient history by medieval history: generally, the two would appear to be very separate from each other.

To summarize: as is well known, it was in the course of the twelfth century that Flemish merchants began to frequent the fairs of Champagne, for example, those of Troyes, Provins and Lagny. Until then, they had been exclusively local affairs. The Flemings, who came to sell their luxury textiles, were followed from the end of the twelfth century by the Italians. During almost the whole of the thirteenth century these six fairs, which together constituted a sort of annual cycle, dominated the commerce of Europe's two most economically advanced regions, Flanders and northern Italy. Merchants and merchandise from many other regions were also in evidence, but the fairs' principal function was

unquestionably to enable the exchange of Flemish textiles for spices and other luxury products of Mediterranean provenance. Besides that, they also played an important financial role. At the end of the thirteenth century, however, their importance declined significantly, to the advantage of such growing urban centres as Paris and Bruges. All the same, other fairs of the same type arose to take their place between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, at Chalon, Geneva, Lyon and Piacenza (De Ligt 1993: 16–20).

The ensemble of these great medieval fairs has often been studied, and they have come to constitute for all historians the very model of the fair as such. It was by using these as his point of comparison that Paul Huvelin (1897) was able to convince himself that Roman antiquity was innocent of fairs, or at most had had only a very few, and those of negligible importance. His conclusions regarding the ancient Roman world were generally accepted, and similar conclusions were drawn for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries too.

One follower of Huvelin was, for example, M.I. Rostovtzeff (1957, first edition 1926), who, despite the sophistication of the medieval fairs, was convinced that they had been bound to disappear as soon as there existed a permanent and well organized commercial sector in a number of urban centres. 'While [seasonal fairs] came to play a secondary part in the more progressive and industrialized regions of the empire and during periods of progressive economic life in general', he wrote (1957: 649 n. 94), 'they were institutions of great and growing importance in the purely agricultural districts, and regained importance in every part of the Empire when economic life became everywhere simplified.' He called for a global study of ancient fairs, but was not much interested in that project himself, and made the mistake, for example, of confusing fairs with periodic markets. He allowed only that seasonal fairs had existed in remote times and continued to exist in marginal or little developed regions.<sup>2</sup> But, in Italy and all the Empire's other active regions they were in jeopardy after the Roman conquests and revived only at the end of the Empire and in the high Middle Ages following the disintegration of the Roman dominium.

In the words of Anne Lombard-Jourdan:

Ancient Italy had had fairs, but the Romans, after their conquests, reached a level of economic development that made fairs unnecessary. In Gaul and Germany, they built monumental forums and warehouses for full-time merchants, but they also tolerated gatherings of native traders. These meetings, for a time overshadowed by the great market-places, revived with the decline of the Empire and the arrival of the 'Barbarians', who were accustomed to holding fairs.

(Lombard-Jourdan 1984: 583)

Such a line of interpretation was taken furthest by Jean Gaudemet (1953). Setting out to conduct research into Roman fairs, he concluded that they simply had not existed.

That, then, was the line taken by ancient historiography under the dominant influence of mediaeval historiography. But we must add that that line was also conformed directly with a certain conception of the ancient economy, often now labelled 'modernist' or 'modernizing'. We enter here into the famous debate over the Ancient Economy. Rostovtzeff was of the opinion that Roman economic life was comparable, in both its organization and its achievements, to that of the seventeenth or eighteenth century. That explains why he was so easily convinced of the absence of fairs from Roman antiquity. By avoiding studying the economy of ancient fairs he was not seeking to preserve intact the specific character of the civilizations of antiquity nor in any way to underline the special role played by politics or culture therein. To the contrary: he was doing all he could to assimilate the ancient civilizations to our own modern civilization. For, notwithstanding the complexity of the great medieval fairs and regardless of their financial role, they appeared to him to be primitive – by comparison with the sophisticated organization of Roman commerce.

The eventual renewal of the study of ancient fairs, in the work of De Ligt (1993), started from a reaction against this modernizing conception of the ancient economy. De Ligt, a pupil of P.W. De Neeve and H.W. Pleket, was inspired by reflection on the thought of M.I. Finley. It would take too long to itemize where precisely he agreed with, and where he departed from, the conclusions of his predecessors. Suffice it to say that, like Pleket, but unlike Finley, he made a point of stressing the similarities between the diverse economies of historical preindustrial societies. Like Finley and Pleket, he posed the question of the comparison between ancient and medieval economies. He concluded that antiquity had often been excessively primitivized, and the medieval world excessively modernized.

So far as fairs were concerned, his working hypothesis was that they existed in all historical preindustrial societies. By scrutinizing texts and inscriptions relating to Greek religious festivals (*panegureis*) he discovered the existence of fairs which Gaudemet had overlooked. He classified them according to the extent of their outreach, so far as that could be established. Some seemed to him purely local, others regional, yet others supra-regional or, as he called them, inter-regional. De Ligt was well aware that inter-regional fairs were not numerous in Roman antiquity and not comparable to those of medieval Champagne. But his wide reading in the general literature on commerce and marketplaces failed to convince him that the presence or absence of medieval-style fairs was a sign of either economic archaism or conversely economic modernity. Other factors besides those had had a part to play. Without going into all the detail of his discussion of ancient commerce I would note only that in his view the most important point of difference was that ancient commerce was above all maritime commerce, unlike that of the thirteenth century. Maritime commerce, he thought, was very ill adapted to a rhythm of annual fairs, since it was very difficult to control the duration of long sea voyages.

Maritime commerce was adapted rather to long carrying seasons, one month or several of permanent activity, a permanent fair if you like.

Refusal to continue merely restating that in antiquity there were no fairs resembling those of the Middle Ages has of course enriched our knowledge of ancient fairs. This historiographical evolution calls for two further comments. First, this is one of those cases where the study of economic phenomena has enabled a better grasp of the specific characteristics of ancient societies, while combating any tendency to modernizing interpretation. Not that economic history is of necessity modernizing. As Huvelin (1897) remarked, markets and fairs have always been complex institutions affecting other aspects besides economic life alone. Law plays a large role in this sphere, as do culture and religion; they are institutions that bring into play the totality of the social life of their period. To neglect them is necessarily to neglect a part of the values and the mentality of the society in question.

My second comment is that, up to now, the commercial aspects of fairs have been studied in isolation from their cultural and religious aspects. For example, studies of panhellenic sanctuaries have never really brought centrally into the picture the commercial activities that went on in them. De Ligt, on the other side, has concentrated on the economic aspects.<sup>3</sup> But separating economic activity from the other activities going on at fairs in this way precludes an understanding of how fairs evolved. The great majority of ancient fairs were not solely economic phenomena, although some are known whose significance was chiefly economic – for example, livestock fairs such as that of the Campi Marci in the Po Valley (Sabattini 1972; Gabba 1975; Susini 1977; Pasquinucci 1986). If you systematically separate the economic domain from the rest, you debar yourself from discovering either when the more specifically economic fairs emerged, or just how far they were distinguished from the great ethnic or religious gatherings.

To conclude, the fair is one of those institutions in which the interpenetration of the economic dimension with the other dimensions is at its most profound and most visible. Not to study the fair as a global social phenomenon is to condemn oneself to fail to grasp the modalities of this interpenetration, and not only for antiquity. Neglect of economic life or the separation of it from the rest of social life is guaranteed to preclude understanding of how the other aspects of social life can determine and shape economic life. For those of us historians who regularly insist on this connection, as a matter of general principle, that is very regrettable.

#### IV

The loans that Cicero contracted or projected in 62 and 61 BCE form the last case that I wish to discuss here. Cicero had held the consulship in 63. In 62 he bought an urban house worthy of his consular rank. Situated on the Palatine, it had previously belonged to Crassus and cost him 3,500,000 HS (*Fam.* 5.6.2;

cf. Andreau 1978). Also in 62, before even concluding the purchase, he had, if we are to believe Aulus Gellius, borrowed two million sesterces from Publius Sulla, nephew of the dictator, for whom doubtless towards the middle of that same year he acted as defence attorney. Sulla was up on a charge of having participated in what is often (wrongly) called the First Catilinarian Conspiracy at the start of 65 and then in the genuine Catilinarian Conspiracy of 63. The latter accusation was very probably correct. Against such a charge the advocacy of Cicero, who during his consulship had almost been assassinated by Catiline's supporters and had conducted the repression of the Conspiracy from start to finish, constituted the best possible defence. Cicero's eloquence was then very highly regarded, and his defence succeeded in getting Sulla off.

Was it because Cicero was in debt to Sulla for this loan that he agreed to defend Sulla? Was there an understanding, a *quid pro quo*, between them? We do not know. P. Autronius Paetus, another senator who had been compromised by the Conspiracy, also asked Cicero to defend him, but was refused. In the *Pro Sulla* Cicero says how much Paetus's supplications had discomfited him. Was that pure hypocrisy? Probably not. The pleas had come from a man who, like Sulla and like himself, had been elected to the consulship. J.-M. David (1992: 77–8) has rightly stressed the symbolic value of such an overture, which followed faithfully the model of the patronage system. It must not be treated lightly. It is of course tempting to overlook all but the financial aspect of the situation, but that would in my opinion be a mistake. Political, social and personal considerations surely all played a role in Cicero's decision. But just how, exactly? We shall never know.

Even if the monetary loan did not in fact determine Cicero to defend Sulla, it may nevertheless be regarded as a gesture of gratitude, on a par with the great service rendered to Sulla by the advocate. Contemporaries did indeed establish a connection between lawsuit and loan. By the *lex Cincia* it was forbidden to pay an advocate a fee or to give him presents (not that the prohibition was always respected). But it was not illegal to make him a monetary loan (see again David 1992). So, legally speaking, Cicero was not at fault. All the same, when his (secret, *mutua tacita*) borrowing became public knowledge (*in vulgo*), disapproval was expressed that he had received money in this way from a defendant. He was reproached with having taken advantage of Sulla's dependent situation. Not that Cicero denied the loan, because that, as Aulus Gellius (NA 12.12) remarked, would have been impossible: 'he brushed aside the reproach with a joke, turning it into a matter for laughter rather than accusation'. We can see from one of his letters to Atticus (*Att.* 1.13.6) that people who, like him, had bought a house thanks to the financial generosity of their friends, were open to criticism. Three and a half million sesterces was moreover an enormous sum, the equivalent of something like one or two million pounds sterling today. Even so, that house of his was less expensive than that of Valerius Messalla Niger, so Cicero was able to write to Atticus that people found it less difficult to excuse him for having appealed to the generosity of his intimates to enable him to make such a purchase.



Sulla's loan was not by itself enough to pay for the house. Towards the end of 62 Cicero appears to have been anticipating another loan, promised by Gaius Antonius (fellow-consul of 63, now governing the province of Macedonia). Relations between these two men were often tense, and there seems to have been an intermediary involved in this anticipated loan of 62–1, a woman of unknown identity whom Cicero calls by the pseudonym of Teucris. The precise role of this 'Teucris' is not at all clear. Was the loan promised by Antonius perhaps the payback for earlier services rendered to him by Cicero? We do not know – although a letter of Cicero's to Antonius of early 62 (*Fam.* 5.5) does allude to a mutual exchange of good offices. Nor is the size of this loan known.

On January 1, 61 BCE, Cicero wrote to Atticus that Teucris was moving much too slowly and that he absolutely had to borrow. He was having to apply to Considius, Axius or Selicius, but not to Q. Caecilius, because the latter stipulated a minimum interest rate of one per cent per month (12 per cent per annum) even for his intimates.<sup>4</sup> Who were these men? This is a subject worth going into in some detail. They were specialized moneylenders (*faeneratores*) but not professional bankers. They were members of either the senatorial or the equestrian elite and dealt with very large sums of money indeed.

At the end of the day Gaius Antonius seems to have paid over the sum he had promised. In a letter to Atticus dated February 13, 61 (*Att.* 1.14.7), Cicero indicates that 'Teucris' had fulfilled her promise. He therefore no longer needed to engage in a loan contract with the *faeneratores*. In the course of the following years the question of such a loan never again arose.

One effect of this episode is to reveal how little Cicero relates of his private affairs outside his correspondence. In some cases, the explanation is dissimulation. For example, we have little difficulty understanding why he makes no mention of these loans in the *Pro Sulla*! In other cases, either there was no call to confide, or the social habits of his milieu enjoined silence. In fact, he rarely says much of importance even about the exploitation of his landed properties, although that was considered the most honourable form of activity. Even in their private correspondence these members of the elite preferred to talk about their public political life and their social relationships within that elite network rather than about their patrimonies. Nevertheless, some private letters do allow us to discern certain aspects of these loans of 62–1. Placed alongside other texts, they permit an understanding of structural aspects of aristocratic finances and, more broadly, of economic life as a whole in the last century of the Republic.

The first of these helps explain such events as the Catilinarian Conspiracy. These notables, in order to meet some exceptional expense, would tend to contract debts they later found hard to discharge. As a rule, their patrimony in the shape of land, animals, town houses and country retreats, slaves, valuables and, often, loans would suffice, but it would not always cover such an extraordinary outlay as the purchase of a prestigious house (as in the case of Cicero here). Catiline and Caesar are well-known examples. Cicero normally showed more financial prudence than they, but even he contracted a debt for a



sum several times larger – perhaps ten times larger or more – than the annual income from his estate. Others lacked his means for getting out of debt, in particular his exceptional oratorical talent. This tendency to get into debt for consumption or prestige purposes is characteristic of the elite of the first century BC, but was not a permanent feature of it throughout its history. The author of the *Letters to Caesar* emphasises the phenomenon strongly.<sup>5</sup> He underlines how senators and *equites* would spend more than their estate could sustain and seek eventually to increase their patrimony. The author (*ad Caes.* 1.5.7) mentions the *faeneratores* in this connection, remarking (1.5.4) that everyone ought to fix as the boundary of their expenses the limits of their patrimony.

The second structural trait to emerge concerns the sources of financing. Since it was normally the patrimony that guaranteed all regular expenses, its management was a matter of some concern. This is well brought out in the *De re rustica* of Cicero's contemporary, Varro. However, we are rather better informed about the occasional or exceptional operations than on the routine management of an estate. Exceptional outlays would generally be covered by exceptional income, whether inheritances or loans. For a senator like Cicero exceptional income would often be derived from political channels, such as the benefits reaped from governing a province and so on, or the indirect or direct profits from his career as an advocate. The evidence reveals that, in this high-ranking senatorial milieu, political sources of profit, inheritances and loans were of outstanding importance. But the patrimony remained the basis of every career of this type, serving as its incontestably necessary if not always sufficient condition.

Likewise Cicero's motives for borrowing to cover exceptional expenditures were political or social rather than economic. They were to meet the cost of electoral campaigns, crises (exile, civil war), dowries, the purchase of an urban residence, and so on. Cicero did not borrow in order to buy land or herds of cattle. It is not however so certain that his peers found themselves in the same position as he in this respect. Whereas Cicero could always call upon his eloquence to increase substantially his income and even his patrimony, they probably had to rely more heavily on economic means to achieve the same effect. Cicero's sixth *Stoic Paradox* (esp. 46–7) shows that Crassus's sources of income included political profits, both legal and illegal, alongside the rewards of private economic enterprise.

For Senators of lower rank, who had ascended no higher up the *cursus honorum* than the quaestorship or aedileship, and for members of the equestrian order who were not part of the tax-collecting societies of *publicani*, the central importance of the management of their patrimonies increased in proportion as their chances of making political profits were slighter. But unfortunately we possess hardly any data on the fortunes of lower-ranking senators. As for the non-publican *equites*, we have in Atticus an excellent illustration, but his connections with the senatorial milieu were exceptionally close, as he managed the private affairs of a whole group of senators and *equites*, including Cicero and his brother Quintus.

A further series of observations may be made, on the personnel involved to whom Cicero contemplated applying for a loan. The Q. Caecilius who is well known as a specialist moneylender (*faenerator*) was none other than Atticus's uncle. He was a very wealthy Roman *eques*, of whom Valerius Maximus (7.8.5) wrote that he had made a considerable pile for himself. When he died in 58 BCE, he left Atticus a fortune of no less than ten million sesterces. He was reputed to be avaricious: the letter of Cicero already quoted (*Att.* 1.12.1) confirms that he indeed was, because he demanded even from his intimates an interest rate that Cicero considered too high.

Q. Considius (*Att.* 1.12.1) was also certainly a *faenerator*, though it is not known whether he was of senatorial or equestrian rank.<sup>6</sup> Whatever was the case, the *faenerator* Considius is known for his services to the state at the time of the Catilinarian Conspiracy, when, if Valerius Maximus (4.8.3) is to be trusted, he lent the enormous sum of fifteen million sesterces. We should, however, note that the monies he loaned did not necessarily all belong to him in their entirety. Along with his own funds he probably put up those of his 'intimates' – his relatives, his friends or his business associates. So as not to aggravate the current debt crisis, he declined to pursue his debtors for either the payment of interest or even the repayment of the principal.

Q. Axius, thirdly, was a senator, one of the interlocutors in Varro's *De re rustica*, in which some information is given on the size of his fortune (Varro, *Rust.* III.2.7; 2.9; 2.15; 17.2–3; see Nicolet 1970). In the Sabine country, near Reate, he was the owner of a property of no more than 200 iugera in area but which brought in a good deal. He raised donkeys, a speciality of the Sabine region, but also went in for horticulture and the farming of fresh-water fish from streams. He also had fine residences at his disposal there, besides the other properties he possessed near Lake Velino (see also Shatzman 1975: 308).

For Q. Axius being a *faenerator* was not incompatible with holding a landed estate. It was only his financial specialization that separated him from a Cicero, Caesar or Atticus, and that specialization was not regarded as a profession. *Faeneratores* were specialist moneylenders. Cicero too sometimes lent money at interest, but in comparison to the size of his patrimony the sums never attained the importance of those lent by a Caecilius or Considius, and the rate of interest he charged tended to be lower. At that period many senators and *equites*, doubtless the majority of them and perhaps even practically all of them, lent money at interest. Some did so occasionally, on condition that others would reciprocate for them if need be, others regularly. Sometimes these loans formed part of a political strategy, as in the case of Caesar. But the *faeneratores*, for their part, distinguished themselves from other senators and *equites*, in that they loaned out far more than they borrowed, making a speciality of the loan of money, and doing so with the objective of accumulating as much money as possible in order to increase their incomes or acquire a more ample patrimony.

Of Selicius, finally, we know nothing, although, given his placement in the company of Considius, Axius, and Caecilius, there is every chance that he too belonged to either the senatorial or the equestrian order.

Q. Caecilius was connected to Cicero by marriage, since his niece Pomponia had wed Quintus Cicero; he was also the uncle of Cicero's closest friend, Atticus. As for Q. Axius, X. Colin (1997) was right to stress that he too was very closely connected to Cicero. Cicero, a friend of Axius, later became his son's creditor, so that relations of reciprocity existed between them. Of Considius and Selicius, however, there is no word in Cicero's correspondence. If some of the *faeneratores* were Cicero's intimates, others were not certainly reckoned among the number of his friends.

We might well wonder whether in 62 Cicero applied for a loan first of all to his close relations and friends, to his brother Quintus, to Atticus, and so on. But there is no evidence, and in any case it was not from them that he in fact borrowed. In other circumstances, though, during the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, we learn from Cicero's correspondence (*Att.* 7.18.4) that Quintus did contract a debt with Atticus, who was his brother-in-law (Andreau 1978: 57–8). Cicero did, however, certainly apply to his peers in 62, to C. Antonius and P. Sulla, senators who were not specialist financiers, but men to whom he had rendered services (at any rate in Sulla's case). Only then did he think of applying to specialist moneylenders who were not professional bankers but often *equites* and even senators at this social level. Among these *faeneratores* some were intimates of Cicero, others not.

There was, in other words, a hierarchy among the various persons to whom one might apply for financial aid. But we must be careful not to confuse this hierarchy, within the Roman senatorial milieu, with the circles identified at Athens by P. Millett (1991). These men are not the equivalent of the professional bankers who at Athens functioned as lenders of last resort. These were *faeneratores* and are to be distinguished from the professional bankers (*argentarii*, *coactores argentarii*) who, economically and socially important though they were, did not handle such large sums. An *argentarius* simply would not have been able to lend Cicero two million sesterces. Rather, a man like Cicero in his situation would evidently make an approach to his intimates first.

I am not sure, as I have explained elsewhere (in Andreau and Bruns 1990: 501–26; Andreau 1995a), whether kin and relatives by marriage would be solicited sooner than personal or political friends. In any case, there was a stream of intimates available, known in Latin as *proximi*, and amongst these networks of intimates one would find friends no less than kinsmen. To go surety for a friend was one of those 'duties' (*officia*) that governed aristocrats' conduct (Verboven 1993). Colin (1997: 77) has acutely remarked that during the Sullan proscriptions loans and borrowings were regarded as signs of one's political allegiance. As Appian (*B Civ.* 1.96) wrote in this regard, 'the giving or receiving of hospitality, the sharing of bonds of friendship, the giving or receiving of a loan, these now became grounds for accusation.'

The borrowings of Cicero that we have been discussing furnish us therefore with a typical example of the individual manoeuvres and strategies that abound in the literature of the first century BCE. My commentary on the available texts has been designed to reveal the economic and social structures lying behind an individual example such as this. At the basis of every senatorial career lay a patrimony consisting principally of landed property. At the very high consular level on which Cicero operated within the Senate the chief transactions undertaken were less to do with the patrimony's productive side than with the expenses that political and social life entailed, and the occasional complementary gains that arose directly or indirectly therefrom.

In my opinion, it is not possible to understand the history of a family like Cicero's, which from being equestrian had become senatorial, without taking bottom-line economics into account as well as political profits and symbolic capital. For sure, symbolic strategies have their own logic, and it is perfectly legitimate to analyse that, as Kurke (1991) has done brilliantly in her study of Pindar's odes. Moreover, symbolic capital grows increasingly important the higher up the social hierarchy one rises. However, by itself it cannot explain the development and reproduction of a senatorial lineage. In the history of such a lineage the economic and the symbolic are constantly and inextricably intertwined. Likewise it is impossible to understand such a lineage if private interests are excluded from the picture and only its public, State role is considered. Most of the financial dealings of Cicero the consular were of a private nature; money from the public treasury was not on offer to him in any quantity at any time.

To sum up: these texts on Cicero's borrowings help us grasp better the financial structures of moneylending within the Roman elite. They reveal the sort of lenders to whom a senator like Cicero would principally have recourse. They allow us to situate the lenders socially and do not prevent us from moving from observations on the individual case and familial strategy to observations of a more structural nature on the organisation of financial life as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

## V

Some conclusions may now be drawn from these case studies regarding the debate over the relationship between 'cultural history' and 'economic history'. In antiquity as today, events and behaviours that are not economic influence economic life, and vice versa. The senators' life of luxury and their borrowings to finance it had economic consequences, both favourable and unfavourable. Conversely, the nature of their patrimonies and the manner in which they were run help to explain the elite's political and social attitudes. If one deliberately ignores a key aspect of a society's ideas, attitudes and life, it is quite impossible to understand them. The problem today is no longer one of knowing whether the cultural determines the economic or vice versa. Posing the problem in

that way leads to no useful result. Reciprocal implications are the real issue, involving both compatibilities and incompatibilities.

All societies, moreover, ancient and non-ancient alike, possess certain major basic characteristics that have an economic dimension; these affect the economy and the remainder of social life at the same time. Scholars who have analysed the notions of action and of the agent in ancient societies touch upon the economy just as much as upon culture (in every sense of that word) (Benveniste 1948; Daube 1969; Vernant 1979: 85–95; Descat 1986). These society-specific basic characteristics are expressed as much in practices as in ideas and ways of thought. My remarks above on the *faeneratores*, bankers, and nonspecialist moneylenders have a close relevance to Roman notions of profession, work, profit, and paid or unpaid activity. They reveal the basic characteristics of ancient societies, including the social cleavages dividing them. They are simultaneously both economic and cultural.

Not infrequently, there is a certain gap, sometimes quite a large one, between social practices and the way they are thought about. This was the case, as we have seen, with the periodic markets (*nundinae*). But that, quite obviously, does not make it legitimate either to neglect the practices while privileging the thinking, or vice versa.<sup>8</sup> In antiquity, indeed, economic factors were so intermingled with other aspects of society that, unlike us, the ancients themselves did not develop a clear and distinct notion of the economy as such. How can we refuse to write ancient economic history when the ancients were even less inclined and less able than we are to separate the economic from the other dimensions of their everyday life? How can we study ancient fairs without mentioning their commercial aspects, when they were for the ancients for most of the time gatherings that embraced simultaneously religious, cultural and economic dimensions?

#### NOTES

- 1 Up to the third century CE, *nundinae* denoted a periodic market, *mercatus* a fair.
- 2 Examples of such fairs are cited at Rostovtzeff 1957: 247 and 249, 251, 266 and 325.
- 3 Frayn (1993) says very little about fairs; her book is devoted above all to periodic markets.
- 4 Cic. Att. 1.12.1: *Opinor ad Considium, Axium, Selicium confugiendum est. Nam a Caecilio propinqui minore centesimis nummum mouere non possunt* ('I'm of the opinion that I'll have to throw myself on the mercy of Considius, Axius, and Selicius. From Caecilius not even his intimates can extract a loan of money at less than one per cent.').
- 5 The *Letters*, which are attributed to Sallust, are either by him or by a contemporary: on their authenticity see Syme 1964: esp. App. 2; Becker 1973.
- 6 Two Considii are known for this period, one a senator, the other an *equus*. Perhaps the two should be identified, in which case we are dealing with an *equus* who entered the Senate under Sulla: Nicolet 1974, II, 848–9.
- 7 On issues relating to the role of kinship, see again Andreau and Bruhns 1990.
- 8 It goes without saying that Pierre Bourdieu (e.g., 1977), by whom Kurke (1991) is decisively influenced, in no way neglects either social practices or the economy, but on the contrary pays them the greatest of attention.

# MERCHANTS, PROSTITUTES AND THE 'NEW POOR'

Forms of contract and social status

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One of the few aspects of *kerdos* on which the legal historian can possibly make a contribution pertains to legal forms and their execution: what form should the diverse activities linked to the circulation of goods and wealth assume in order for them to be admissible in law and sanctioned in justice?

Since Marcel Mauss, historians of Greek law have traced the origins of contract to economic exchange. However, in the judgement of this French anthropologist,

Contract and exchange by no means bear the individual and purely economic aspect of transfer, a system conventionally dubbed 'natural economy'; although there is no guarantee that there ever existed a society where this economy functioned exclusively or normally. In general, it was not individuals, but collectivities, clans and large families, who dealt with one another, often contracting a perpetual alliance, particularly in the form of marriage, an alliance in the full sense of the word. This ancestry remained alive in the concept of contract into the fourth century, and perhaps even later. The mutual obligations which these collectivities reciprocally imposed on each other not only encompassed all the individuals, and often the succeeding generations, but also extended to all activities and all sorts of wealth. Thus, one could exchange for dances, for initiations, everything which the clan possessed in the expectation of reciprocity: women, children, food, rites and heritage; all these were placed in circulation. These exchanges were consequently not exclusively economic in nature, but quite the reverse. We propose to call this the 'system of total prestation'.

(Mauss 1921: 388)

The marks of this ancestry are still visible in the contractual relationships of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, and even later. Greek contract always generated this element of reciprocity of prestations<sup>1</sup> except it was not the creator of legal effects, and in particular, it did not give birth to a legal action, a *dike*. Thus, deriving from exchange, every contractual relation had to be executed in a real way, 'from hand to hand', whatever the social or the economic status of the contracting parties. It is precisely this real, material character which gives the contract, whatever it may concern, its whole essence. In the loaning of money, for example, the responsibility of the debtor is founded on the fact that he has received a sum of money from the creditor, which he must return within the agreed period, and not because he has promised to return an amount equal to the sum paid to him. In the rental of real property, the tenant in fact received the use of the property in contracting a deposit, because the depository always actually received goods to keep, it was always a real act, the transfer of a good which created as a consequence the responsibility of the recipient.

A simple promise and, for even stronger reason, a reliance, did not lead to the conclusion of a contractual relationship protected by legal action, in conformity with the adage 'there is no lawsuit between those who trust each other' (Véligaropoulos-Karakostas 1994: 185). The drawing up of a document, in the form of a *homologia* (agreement) or *syngraphe* (covenant), presupposed a contract already concluded in a real way. This is testified by the use of the past tense by those who drew up the documents in practice, from the maritime loan contract recorded in the speech *Against Lacritos* (Dem. 35.10: *edaneisan*: they loaned), right up to such stereotypical phrases in Hellenistic contracts as 'I agree to have from you . . . which things I will also give back.'<sup>2</sup> Here, in brief, is the concept of Greek contract such as it appears in the Attic orators and in actual documents from the start of the Hellenistic period. In such a way was it formulated by H. J. Wolff and accepted, with some amendments by specialists in Greek law, with the exception of the Italian school which remains attached to a more or less Roman-law paradigm for Greek contract (Vinogradoff 1922: 230; Monier et al. 1956: 127; Biscardi 1991: 228; cf. Beauchet 1897: volume 4, 12).

In fourth-century Athens, at Thurioi (Theophr. *Peri symbolaion* 97, apud Stob. *Flor.* 44.22) and doubtless elsewhere too, everyone, whether rich or poor, landed proprietor or propertyless, citizen or foreigner, had to resort to the same contractual paradigm, the contract 'from hand to hand', if they wanted to benefit from the protection of the civic courts. The form of the Greek contract thus appears to have been dictated by mistrust, by the *fides graeca* ('Greek trust'), present in business relationships throughout Greek antiquity. It seems to me, however, that that is an enormous generalisation which ultimately, on the one hand, disassociates the contractual bond from those who engage in it, and on the other hand, views the lawsuit (*dike*) as the only means to resolve disputes.



### Principal contracting parties

To reserve the terms 'contract' and 'contractual obligation' only for relationships realised in cash amounts to ignoring personal relationships, bonds of friendship, kinship, origin or neighbourhood, which could exist between the contracting parties and which, in their eyes, rendered the perspective of a lawsuit quite improbable. In fact, the simultaneity of prestations seems to become imperative when the factor of the 'otherness' of the contractual partner intervenes: foreigner, metic, slave, poor or destitute, female prostitute, inhabitant of another deme, tenant farmer, these are the qualities which differentiated these people in relation to the model of the land-owning citizen and his female counterpart, the *aste gamete* (married citizen woman), bearer of citizens.<sup>3</sup>

'Otherness' was certainly not an invention of the classical city. However the latter certainly seems to have contributed significantly to both the proliferation of 'others' and to emphasising the implications of otherness. Even when these 'others' were not excluded from the political and legal apparatus of the city, one constantly finds confusion about how they were regarded, and an equivocal attitude to their real status: to what degree precisely were they different from the model citizen? This is precisely the question which has preoccupied Ed Cohen for many years, beginning with maritime traders and continuing with his investigations into the world of banking, the *astoi* ('townsmen'), and female prostitutes.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, it was in Athens, in the middle of the fifth century that the mistrust of 'otherness' penetrated such realms as marriage and business. Aside from sheer population increase, changes in the demographic profile of the city set in motion a rise in the number of transactions of every kind conducted in markets, within the *emporion* (trading centre) of Piraeus, in brothels and elsewhere. Legislative measures to protect purchasers in the agora, which we know from the orators,<sup>5</sup> perhaps reflect the activities of the merchants described by Aristophanes.<sup>6</sup> The first legislative measures about *homologia* should date from the end of the fifth century, of which the oldest must be the one reported by Deinarchos.<sup>7</sup> Thus, at the beginning of the fourth century, one sees the formation of a class described by E. Will (1975: 244) as the 'new poor', whose status was not necessarily that of foreigner. Small peasant farmers, small-time local merchants, a whole series of trades attached to major commerce such as the *phortegoi* (cargo hauliers) and the *kapeloi* (retailers, tavern-keepers), the prostitutes who never attained the rank of *hetairai* ('courtesans'), tenant farmers, renters of houses or a room in a *pandocheion* (inn), craftsmen or labourers; it is people of this social level who participated in the majority of the small business dealings carried out daily in Athens and Piraeus. These were people who were often not acquainted with each other and who did not even know whether they would ever have the chance or desire to meet again.

In the port cities, the *emporion* served as the meeting point *par excellence* not only for maritime traders and the *naukleroi* (ship owners), but also for a



whole mix of individuals, citizens and foreigners, pursuing a very wide range of activities.<sup>8</sup> This human amalgam grew when city and trading port became identified, as in the case of Byzantium.<sup>9</sup> The opinion held by their contemporaries of the people assembled inside or around the *emporion* was not always flattering. Treated as 'the foul mob', they were considered to be contagious carriers of immorality.<sup>10</sup> If the inhabitants of Byzantium were corrupt, that was only to be expected, in the eyes of Theopompus, because their city was located on the site of the *emporion* and thus they frequented the market and the port alike (*FGrH* IIB, 115, 62=Ath., 12.526 d–f.). The proximity of the town in relation to the trading port, this 'rough and salty' neighbourhood, caused a mingling of foreign sailors and citizens, with deplorable consequences which affected the very institutions of the city. In the words of Plato, the penetration of foreign elements into the city stimulated 'a mixture of all kinds of customs, thanks to the innovations prompted by the contact of foreign peoples. For cities regulated by just laws this would be a cause of great harm' (*Pl. Leg.* 4.705a; 12.949d–950a). This is certainly the cry of a moralistic author, but it is not totally devoid of accuracy. Contact with the world of the *emporion* certainly did not lead Athens to modify her constitution. But, it is more than likely that these relations, characterized by mistrust towards the other party and uncertainty regarding reimbursement, favoured the 'hand to hand' contractual model and banned, at least from the Athenian courts, contracts which were based on reliance, on the trust, the *pistis*, of the parties.

As a foundation of contractual responsibility, *pistis* has been rejected by historians of Greek law, but that conclusion, it seems to me, must be qualified both temporally and spatially. Contracts formed 'from hand to hand' and contracts founded on trust without immediate delivery and simultaneous prestations must have coexisted temporally. There really had been an age, of which the Homeric poems give an echo, when business or other relationships, conducted between members of powerful groups, rested on trust inspired by the parties' wealth, bravery, reputation or familial power (von Reden 1995: 18). In these circles, the relations of exchange did not necessarily occasion prestations furnished by the two parties on the spot. Reciprocity was present, since the gift generated the obligation to supply a counter-gift; but that obligation was not immediate, because the prestation of the contractual partner could be supplied in the future by either the original 'debtor' or by a member of his community. The same goes for acts of generosity, gifts, loans or early prestations performed by the propertied for destitute persons. These transactions, without being acts of generosity in the true sense of the word, implied compensation in the form of goods or services, to be provided by the debtor in the future (E. Will 1975: 233).

Nevertheless, contemporary with this contractual form, in everyday life, transactions between small peasants, farmers and craftsmen who sold or exchanged their surplus production were conducted 'from hand to hand'. The relationship between the parties was, in this case, dictated by necessity and

governed by mistrust or uncertainty about the possibility of future prestation. *Pistis* and the future compensatory prestation which accompanied it had no place in this type of business. Reminiscences of aristocratic *pistis* are to be found in tragic drama, and in expressions such as ‘pledge the trust of your hand’ (Soph. *Phil.* 813) or ‘give me the trust of your hand’ (Soph. *OC* 1632).<sup>11</sup> It persisted, too, in some vestiges of legal symbolism in later centuries (lead tablets from Corfu [van Effenterre and Ruzé 1995: no 73] and Pech Maho [van Effenterre and Ruzé 1995: no 75]), while the collective character of ‘debt’ still persisted into the fifth and fourth centuries and even beyond in the exercise of *syla* (*syle*: right of seizure).<sup>12</sup>

In the legal context, equality of contractual forms – real contracts and agreements founded on *pistis* – does not seem to have persisted outside its natural environment which was that of an aristocratic and agrarian society. On the one hand, the territorial city and its increasing population, and on the other hand the circulation of money favoured the second type of transaction, that is to say real contracts, to the detriment of those founded on trust. Aside from its ethical and political functions acknowledged by Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 5, 5, 1133a; *Pol.* 1257a–b), Thucydides (2.40.4, 5) and Aristophanes (*Plut.* 229ff.), the circulation of money played a fundamental role in the formation of legal rules governing the different transactions in the sphere of the circulation of goods and wealth. Every sentence pronounced by the courts henceforth was formulated in terms of money, and the plaintiff was obliged to accept it. The parties could agree a penalty or compensation *in natura* (in kind), but the court did not impose these verdicts. In the realm of private transactions, the circulation of money made possible the legal ban on loans secured by the debtor’s body, even if this ban did not entirely eliminate such agreements in practice. Money constituted a prestation accepted by every creditor and accessible, at least in theory, to every debtor. To repeat the conclusions of E. Will (1975: 233), money provided an ideal and objective measure, which need not be physically present to remain indispensable. This ideal function explains how the commercial activities of certain cities like Byzantium and Carthage were able to go on before the striking of coinage.

Coinage facilitated the spread of real contracts, and the demographic changes which occurred in Athens in the second half of the fifth century made these agreements less risky than credit transactions conducted with little-known partners of uncertain solvency. But it was the appearance, from the first decades of the fourth century, of the class of the ‘new poor’ (E. Will 1975: 244) which made this contractual form imperative and the one exclusively used, at least when the factor of the ‘otherness’ of the contractual partner made itself felt. The spread of the formula *apedoto-epriato* (‘sold-bought’) in contracts of sale (Pringsheim 1950: 103–11) places in relief not only the simultaneous character of the parties’ prestations, but also the fact that the vendor had ‘abandoned’ a right (that which he had over the thing sold), for the profit of the purchaser who, as a result, had to pay the agreed price. It is extremely tempting to make

a comparison between the Greek concept of contract and the Anglo-Saxons' common law notion of 'consideration'. Pollock's<sup>13</sup> definition –

Consideration means not so much that one party is profited as that the other abandons some legal right in the present, or limits his legal freedom of action in the future, as an inducement for the promise of the first.<sup>14</sup>

(Pollock 1889: 172)

– is not very far from the Greek concept of contract and the notion of *blabe* (damage), an indispensable element for enabling legal proceedings for the action called *dike blabes* in the Athenian courts (Wolff 1957: 26ff; 1961a: 91ff; 1961b: 129ff; 1966a: 569ff; 1966b: 366ff).

The use of real contracts became general from the second half of the fifth century, at least when the parties felt a certain mistrust with regard to the credibility of their contracting partner, and did not want to see themselves deprived of the *dike* which accompanied the transaction. As for *pistis*, synonymous with generosity, that was as an aristocratic ideal accepted by Periclean democracy, considering that it (the aristocratic ideal) contributed to the circulation of money, to the 'cycle of goods' (*kyklos chrematon*), and, because of this, constituted an agent of political and social equilibrium (E. Will 1975: 245). It (*pistis*) continued to be associated with acts of generosity by the rich towards the poor, but, above all, by the city towards its citizens, and it continued to provide the ethical framework for the distribution of goods. For Demokritos (Gagarin and Woodruff 1995: 157), *pistis* was an agent of *homonoia* (concord) and *charis* (grace) among the citizens; it was associated by the Anonymous Iamblich (Gagarin and Woodruff: 290–5) with *eunomia* (good order), and by Thucydides and Aristophanes with democratic freedom. But in Athens of the fifth century, *pistis* no longer appeared to constitute the basis of contractual relationships, which gave rise to legal action. Plato, Aristotle and Theophrastos confirm the point that 'for those who have trust in each other there is no lawsuit'.

Did this proliferation of real contracts entail the disappearance of credit transactions? Did the contracting parties, through fear of seeing themselves deprived of legal redress, conduct their transactions solely in cash? That hardly seems likely. In the first place, part of the business conducted between citizens in classical Athens doubtless continued to be governed by 'the ideology of civic friendship' (Millet 1991), which not only served to restrict the profits taken by the creditor, but also encouraged contracts of sale on credit, that is to say, without an immediate and simultaneous transfer of the purchase price. The adage 'for those who have trust in each other there is no lawsuit' is not in these instances set aside; but in the place of the *dike* and the sentence of a court, it is the social context of the contracting parties which encourages or even constrains the debtor to discharge his debt. It must not be forgotten that, even in business affairs brought before the Athenian courts, the acquittal of the defendant was

not within the competence of the legal organs of the city. The court decided whether the defendant should pay, how much he should pay the plaintiff, and the proper means for the latter to secure repayment on his own behalf. *Praxis kathaper ek dikes*, meaning that 'execution will take place in accordance with the decision of the court', left much to the initiative of the creditor and his associates during the discharge of the legal sentence (Wolff 1970: 527; Meyer-Laurin 1975: 189).

### *Diaita* (arbitration)

In agreements amicably conducted, any litigation that ensued could be settled in the same way, that is to say by means of a private *diaita* (arbitration), without the matter being brought before a court which would certainly reject the demands of the creditor who had concluded a sale or another contract on credit. In the case of litigation which might arise from a relationship where only one of the contracting parties had supplied the agreed prestation, the other having only received, that is to say a relationship based on *pistis*, Athenian law did not refuse all protection to naïve contractors, but allowed recourse to private arbitration.<sup>15</sup> The person who had faith in his co-contractor perhaps had no *dike*, that is a legal action to recover what he was owed, but he could obtain arbitration by a decision at arbitration, and that had coercive and enforceable power (Karabélias 1997: 148).

The weight of the defence speeches of the Attic orators, declaimed on the occasion of legal proceedings, initiated by means of *dikai* or by the use of the *paragraphe* (counterplea), was such that private arbitration appeared to be overridden by the jurisdiction of the popular courts and by the judicial resolution of disputes. However, references by ancient authors to terms for arbitration: *diaita*, *diallage*, *epitrope* or *dialysis* (*diaitan epitrephein*, *dialyein*, *diallassein*) are particularly numerous, allowing us to perceive that attempts to resolve differences amicably, even if not imposed by law, were dictated by social morality.<sup>16</sup> It looks very much as though the law on arbitration, voted in during the archonship of Euclides (Dem. 21.94), and dictated by the need for peacemaking (after a period of civil war), fell in line with the contempt felt toward those who, before bringing a *dike*, failed to exhaust the possibilities of an extra-judicial resolution of their differences. By way of expressing his contempt towards litigants and their legal proceedings, Aristophanes (*Eq.* 92–4) associated winning a lawsuit with the consumption of wine: 'Look you see, it's when they drink, that men are rich, they succeed in business, they win their lawsuits, they are happy and they help their friends'.

*Kerdos*, then, could be accomplished either by means of a real contract, giving rise to a *dike*, or by means of a credit agreement based on *pistis* that allowed recourse to private arbitration. As for the object of these agreements, besides simple transactions (sale, loan, rental, etc.), the realisation of *kerdos* was effected also by means of *mixed contracts*. Amongst the most ancient transactions referring

to a contractual relationship of mixed character was the *prasis epi lysei* ('sale on release') (Paoli 1930/1974: 117; Harrison 1968: 256, 316; Finley 1985c: 31, 296). This type of agreement combined at least two different contracts: a cash sale and a loan of money. The sum paid by the buyer to the seller as the price of purchase was in reality a monetary loan, the amount of which was ultimately lower than the value of the real estate, allowing the creditor to realize a considerable *kerdos* (profit).<sup>17</sup> It is without doubt the *prasis epi lysei* of archaic and classical law from which the *ônè en pistei* (purchase on trust) of the Hellenistic documents developed.<sup>18</sup> Loaning of money and sale were transactions often combined in attested documents, but they were not the only ones. Among the mixed contracts which have their own special designation, the papyri inform us of the *antichresis*, a contract of use (Rupprecht 1992: 271), and the *paramone*, a contract of services (Herrmann 1963: 152; Adams 1964; Hengstl 1972: 29), by means of which the interest agreed on a loan of money was paid and possibly also paid at the same period as them. Further, we note the *prodroma* (prepayment) (e.g. *P. Cair. Zen.* 59269; Geginat 1964; Herrmann 1982: 247), the *misthoprasia* (sale under long lease) of ships (Vélissaropoulos 1980: 273; Purpura 1988: 5–27), the *misthōsis epi karpōniai* (lease for fruit buying) (Pringsheim 1950: 309; Kniepkamp 1970: 83), the *daniokarpia* (interest bearing loan) or the *misthokarpia* (leased usufruct) (Rupprecht 1984: 273), and a whole further series of contractual amalgamations which reveal the inventive spirit of the Greeks in the realm of realising *kerdos*. Apparently behind the last of these mixed agreements, was concealed the inequality of the prestations between the parties, an inequality not admitted by social morality and perhaps also forbidden by law. Under the guise of, for example, an *ônè en pistei*, a usurious loan or a sale at a derisory price could hide, so that these agreements could serve as an instrument for realising profit from transactions which were not intrinsically very profitable.

In summary, it seems very much that reciprocity of benefit remained present in contractual relationships throughout Greek antiquity. Likewise, the simultaneity of prestations was observed, at least when the contracting parties had the means to do so, or when their personal relationship was such that they were not taking the risk of seeing themselves deprived of access to legal action. If, in spite of this danger, they trusted their contractual partner and that partner betrayed them, the resolution of the conflict lay in the hands of the members of their community, of the private arbitrators who attempted to resolve the dispute. Private arbitration, widely practised and covering a broad range of cases, constituted an effective remedy when the Athenian courts refused to allow a legal action, a *dike*, for transactions where simultaneous prestations had not taken place. Unlike *dikai* and, for even stronger reasons, *graphai*, private arbitration was accessible to all. Citizens or foreigners,<sup>19</sup> men or women, wives or courtesans,<sup>20</sup> could hope for the resolution of their disputes, whether real or consensual, resulting from 'any commitment contracted and not fulfilled in conformity with the agreements' (Pl. *Leg.* 920d), by an arbitrator, citizen

or foreigner,<sup>21</sup> and who was above all *philos*<sup>22</sup> (a friend) and a man who inspired trust.

## NOTES

- 1 Translators' note: We have deliberately left the French term 'prestation' untranslated since the author has used it in the technical sense developed by Mauss for the elements of exchange. This follows the practice used by Cunnison in his now classic translation of Mauss' *Essai sur le don* (Mauss 1966).
- 2 *P. Teb.* 110=Hunt-Edgar, *Select Papyri* I 68 (92 or 52 BCE): consumption loan. *P. London* II 154=Mitteis, *Chrestomathie* 255 (63 CE): ὁμολογεῖ ὁ δεῖνα πεπρακέναι τῷ δεῖνα κατὰ τὴν δε τὴν ὁμολογίαν 'so and so agrees that he exacted payment from such-and-such according to the agreement' (sale of real estate). *PSI* 902=*P. Mich.* V 355 (first century CE): ὁμολογῶ παρῆξεσθαι ἔμαντὸν ἐφ' ἔτη δύο ἀπὸ τοῦ προκειμένου χρόνου, 'I agree to make myself available for two years from the appointed year' (lease of services). *P. London* II 334 (166 BCE): ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ δεῖνα ἔχειν . . . ἄρραβῶνα 'they agree to hold . . . the pledge'.
- 3 Todd 1994: 125, overestimates the importance of political membership for the participation of an individual in the legal life of the city; Cohen 1994: 141 for his part reckons the economic reality of the fourth century rendered necessary the admission, in the legal sphere, of persons who did not have the status of citizen (foreigners, slaves), and that this access led to the separation between civic status and a subject of 'subjective rights'.
- 4 In addition to Cohen 1994, cited above, see also Cohen 1992, 1997: 57.
- 5 Hyp. 4.14 (*contra Athenogenem*): *apseudein en tēi agora*: 'telling the truth in the agora'; Dem. 20.9 (*contra Leptinem*): 'Is it not disgraceful, men of Athens, according to the law written on telling the truth in the agora, if someone is dishonest, he is not required to pay any public damages?'; Harpocration, s.v. *kata tēn agoran apseudein*. Cf. Willetts 1967: col. VII, l. 10 and commentary, p. 70; Triantaphyllopoulos 1971: 710; Gofas 1993: 178.
- 6 *Ar. Eq.* 181; de Ste. Croix 1972: 225, did not think that that economic activities were tolerated in the classical agora. Cf., however, Stroud 1974: 157 (= Bogaert, *Epigraphica* III, no 21); Cohen 1992: 67.
- 7 Deinarchos, *contra Philoclem* 4: 'the common law of the city enjoining that, if someone makes an agreement against the interests of the citizens, he has committed an offence, and this person is liable to legal action for injustice, for he has thoroughly deceived all the Athenians and has betrayed the trust which he took from you.'
- 8 Poll. 9.34: 'the tavern and whorehouse are part of the trading centre, which can be called "houses".'
- 9 Theopompus, *FGrH* II B, 115, 62=Ath. 12.526d-f: πόλιν ἐπ' ἐμπορίου κεκμένην καὶ τὸν δῆμον ἅπαντα περὶ τὴν ἀγορὰν καὶ τὸν λιμένα διατρίβειν, 'a city based on a commercial exchange, and the whole populace hangs around the agora and the harbour'. Vélassaropoulos 1980: 29.
- 10 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, 4, 32: κακοδαίμονεστερόν τι . . . ἔθνος, 'a rather more blighted . . . people'.
- 11 Cf. Hesychius, s.v. δεξιᾶς, 'promises; agreements; pledges; the touching of right hands which happened at agreements as a sign that they would be secure and it was in accordance with what was agreed'.
- 12 Dareste 1889: 305-20; Schlesinger 1933; Gauthier 1972: 209-84; Bravo 1980: 675-987. Rigsby 1996 does not deal with questions of private law.
- 13 Cf. Atiyah 1979: 453; Gordley 1991: 172.

- 14 Cf. Currie v. Misa 1875: Exch.153 (162): 'A valuable consideration in the sense of the Law, may consist either in some right, interest, profit, or benefit accruing to the one party, or some forbearance, detriment, loss or responsibility, given, suffered, or undertaken by the other.'
- 15 The law is cited by Dem. 21.94 (*contra Meidiam*): 'If people disagree with each other about private contracts and they wish to choose someone as arbitrator, it is permitted for them to choose whoever they wish to serve as arbitrator. When they choose someone together, they must stick with the judgement made by this person, and they can no longer transfer the charges from this person to another court, but let the judgement made by the arbitrator be valid.' Cf. Pl. *Leg.* 920d; Isoc. 15.27; Karabélias 1997: 135.
- 16 For example, Dem. 21.94; 27.1; 29.58; 30.1. 33.14–15, 30, 32; 34.18, 31; 36.15; 38.6; 40.39; 41.14, 28; 42.19; 52.14, 30; 56.17–18; 59.45, 68–9; Andoc. 1.42, 87–8; Isoc. 15.17, 27; 17.19–20, 52; 18.10; Isae. 2.30; 5.31; Lys. 8.12; 32.2; fr. 37.1; Antiph. 6.39; Pl. *Leg.* 956b.
- 17 Kränzlein 1963: 79: 'An die Stelle des Kaufpreises trat bei der *prasis epi lysei* die Darlehensvaluta' ('the place of the purchase price is taken by the *prasis epi lysei*, the value of the loan').
- 18 Gerhard–Gradenwitz 1904: 498 = Mitteis, *Chrestomathie*, 233 (111 BCE): κατὰ συγγράφην ὀνῆς ἐν πίστει, 'according to the written agreement of a sale in trust'; P. Adler gr. 2 (124 BCE). BGU II 464 (132/133 CE, πρᾶσις ἐν πίστει, sale in trust). Herrmann 1989: 324: 'Zweifellos bestehen zwischen der (griechischen) *prasis epi lysei* und der ptolemäischen *ônè en pistei* weitreichende Übereinstimmungen' ('Doubtless between the (Greek) *prasis epi lysei* and the Ptolemaic *ônè en pistei* there exist far-reaching correspondences').
- 19 Parmenon (Dem. 33.20) was from the Troad where his wife and children lived.
- 20 Neaira and her daughter Phano (Dem. 59.45ff, 68ff.).
- 21 Isoc. 17.19 the parties, Pasion and a foreigner, agreed to resort to the arbitration of the Bosporan king, Satyros.
- 22 For example, Dem. 30.2; 41.14; Isoc. 15.27; Lys. 32.2; 37.1; Isae. 2.29–33; Antiph. 6.38–9.



# DOMINATION AND EXPLOITATION

*Dimitris J. Kyrtatas*

## I

The most intriguing feature regarding 'exploitation' in the ancient Greek world is that the ancient Greeks do not seem to have had a clear notion of it. If by 'exploitation' we mean 'the extraction and utilisation of the product of unpaid labour of a person or a group of persons by others' – which is only one of its several possible meanings – then, to begin with, we are in some difficulty finding an equivalent ancient Greek term. Aspects of this action were variously expressed, but the Greeks never really felt the need to denote it in a single and comprehensive word – let alone to define it.<sup>1</sup>

What makes this 'failure of the Greeks' intriguing is the way it contrasts with our modern understanding of economic and social relations. 'The exploitation of man by man' is, in our times, a common and meaningful expression, applicable to most human societies. Regarding slavery, for example, amid general disagreement, hardly any scholar would care to contest the view that part of the wealth produced in the ancient Greek world derived from the appropriation of the labour of slaves. When Karl Marx presented his theories of surplus-value, he claimed that he had been able to reveal the concealed exploitation of wage-labourers in the light of the transparent slave-exploitation. The transparent conditions of slave-exploitation are visible even to those who find the comparison worthless.

The employment of slaves in production is acknowledged by several ancient authors (cf. Jameson 1977; de Ste. Croix 1981: 505–8). Xen. (*Oec.* 11.3) took it for granted that in a wealthy household all agricultural labourers, including their overseer, would be slaves. Aristotle, who regarded slavery as a topic worth serious investigation, went as far as suggesting that 'those who are to cultivate the soil should best of all, if the ideal system is to be stated, be slaves'. Even utopian societies could not be imagined without slavery, unless 'every tool could perform its own work when ordered' (Arist. *Pol.* 1330a26, 1253b34–1254a1; Vlastos 1941; Vogt 1974: 26–38). But master and slave relations were



never presented by any Greek author in terms of economic exploitation. In Aristotle's account (which is by far the most systematic and informative we possess) master and slave relations are treated as a form of domination.<sup>2</sup> This approach is well brought out by the way the philosopher defines a slave's 'nature' and 'essential quality':

One who is a human being belonging by nature not to himself but to another is by nature a slave, and a person is a human being belonging to another if being a man he is an article of property, and an article of property is an instrument for action (*praktikon*) separable from its owner.

(Arist. *Pol.* 1254a15–17)

It has sometimes been suggested that by calling a slave an instrument for action, i.e., for services, Aristotle was thinking of household servants rather than producers (Barker 1959: 362). Slaves were indeed employed in many different ways, some of which could hardly qualify as productive. But this consideration was clearly not what Aristotle had in mind. In his treatment of slavery he does not differentiate between slaves involved in production and slaves involved in services. Such a distinction was meaningless to him. He reminds his readers that 'different slaves have different functions, some more honourable and some more menial' (Arist. *Pol.* 1255b28–9). Indeed, Aristotle regarded the actions of all slaves as services, whether they were productive or not.<sup>3</sup>

There are problems with Aristotle's definition, the most important of which is his idea of 'nature' and 'natural slavery' (Garnsey 1996: 108–10). In my view, even the philosopher himself was not totally satisfied with this part of his theory and only retained it as workable in principle, though not in actual life. He pointed out a number of instances contradicting his theory without attempting to resolve the contradictions (Arist. *Pol.* 1254b–1255a). The only serious explanation he proposed regarding the discrepancies between theory and real life was that 'nature, frequently, while intending to do this, is unable to bring it about' (Arist. *Pol.* 1255b 3–4) – which, actually, begs the question.

It is important to underline in Aristotle's definition the assertion that slaves are 'articles of property'. Articles of property, as the philosopher explains, are actually parts of their owner, absolutely belonging to them (Arist. *Pol.* 1254a9–13). By wholly belonging to their masters, i.e., by being separable parts of the bodies of their masters, slaves hardly qualified as labourers or producers: they were seen as their masters' capacity, so to speak, of putting instruments of production to work. 'Hence', the philosopher goes as far as claiming, 'there is a certain community of interest and friendship between slave and master' (Arist. *Pol.* 1255b11–14).

It thus becomes clear that in analysing slavery, exploitation was not only inappropriate as an analytical concept, but totally irrelevant. A master cannot be said to exploit a part of his own being (except in the sense of exploiting one's

capacities). If slaves belonged absolutely to a master, then everything that was produced through their services, and everything they possessed, including their bodies and their lives, belonged to their master as well. In its details, this theory is, no doubt, an Aristotelian construction. Its implications, however, seem to have been commonly acknowledged. The only significant issue regarding slavery, even in the view of those who had reservations about the institution, was that a human being *belonged* to another human being, not that a labourer was not given his due (Cambiano 1987). As the ancients saw it, slaves were, above all, dominated.

From our point of view, however, this is not quite so. All that slaves produced did not really belong to their masters. Slaves had been bought or raised at their masters' expense. Furthermore, slaves had to be fed, clothed, housed and taken care of, at least to the level of subsistence.<sup>4</sup> Often, to be able to perform their duties properly, slaves would be allowed to live above the level of subsistence – sometimes on their own (*choris oikountes*) (Cohen 1994b). This means that part of what slaves produced did not go to their masters. It went either to their reproduction, or to their maintenance – occasionally it went to their well being. Many slaves had to pay only a sum determined (usually) in advance (*apophora*). Besides, slave-producers would have to sustain non-producing slaves, including housekeepers (*tamiai*) and overseers (*epitropoi*, *epistatai*).

By stressing domination and ownership, i.e., political and legal categories, ancient authors overlooked exploitation, i.e., an economic category. Masters certainly knew that buying and sustaining slaves cost money, but they do not seem to have realized that this money actually 'belonged' to their slaves. To phrase it differently, the way in which masters exploited their slaves, i.e. by possessing their whole body, concealed the fact that they did not possess all the products of their labour (Marx 1971: 539–40).

There is no evidence that masters ever calculated the net profit they would make through the employment of their slaves. Production was normally performed at the level of the household (*oikos*) as a unity (Foxhall 1994b; also, with respect to war, Foxhall 1993). All household expenses, of whatever kind, would be added to the same entry. Ancient household organization did not require the evaluation of the productivity of individuals, let alone of 'instruments', such as slaves. Of course, masters knew what they earned when they hired their slaves out by the day to a third party; and they knew what slaves working on their own paid in. But as a rule they did not subtract the expenses they made on their behalf.<sup>5</sup>

I shall argue that this 'concealment' of exploitation did not affect the logistics of masters alone. It may have been, at least partly, responsible for the way in which ancient Greek thinkers tended to regard, or rather disregard, aspects of the economy. For it seems that social relations which we would be inclined to consider mostly through their economic implications, the Greeks were inclined to consider mostly through their political or moral implications.<sup>6</sup> I shall take Aristotle as my guide, but much of what I have to say applies to Greek mentality in general.

## II

Aristotle's theory of natural slavery was, in a sense, restrictive. As he observes, a number of slaves did not really deserve to be considered slaves, either because they had been enslaved in 'unjust wars' or because they were not 'by nature' slaves. For 'there exist certain persons who are essentially slaves everywhere and certain others who are so nowhere' (Arist. *Pol.* 1255a31–2). No remedy to this unjust treatment was proposed. At the same time, Aristotle's theory was more inclusive. By defining a slave as a human being who belongs to another human being, whenever human beings worked in a way that the product of their labour belonged to another human being, they were regarded, for all practical purposes, as slaves, or came very close to being regarded as slaves, even though they were not really the property of a master. Hence the commonly used term, 'slavish' (*doulikon*).

Debt-bondage, which clearly differed in important respects from slavery (Finley 1981g), was often considered by ancient authors as slavery. Even the free poor, working under harsh conditions were likened to slaves. This equation led Aristotle to produce a rather confusing description of Athenian society just before the Solonian reforms.<sup>7</sup> According to his account, poor Athenians, along with their wives and children, had to pay a burdensome rent to the rich. Because of this situation, instead of drawing attention to their exploitation by the rich, Aristotle says that the poor were enslaved (*edouleuon*) to the rich – although he knew well that they were not actually called slaves by their contemporaries but clients (*pelatai*) and sixth-parters (*bektemoroi*).<sup>8</sup> As it happened, some of these Athenians failed to pay their rents (*misthoseis* – the word *misthos* also means wage). In such cases they became slaves to their debtors. To describe this new development Aristotle had, therefore, to use a different term and says that these people could now be 'carried away' or 'were liable to seizure' (*agogimoi*), i.e., they became the property of their debtors and could be sold – as they sometimes actually were (Solon 24 [Diehl]). According to Aristotle, poor Athenians did not complain because of their poverty or because of their debts, but because they were enslaved (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 2.2; Andrewes 1982).

The poor, as we learn from several other sources, actually complained in many cities about their debts. But the call for the cancellation of debts – in our eyes a clearly economic demand – was regarded by the ancient Greeks as a political demand, very often accompanied by a call for the redistribution of land. At the League of Corinth, organized by Philip II in 338/7, both measures (along with the freeing of slaves with a view to revolution) were explicitly forbidden as dangerous political innovations ([Dem.] 17.15).

Apart from outright slavery and debt-bondage, a third type of what we would call unfree labour existed in Sparta (*heilotai*), Thessaly (*penestai*) and a number of other Greek communities (Garlan 1988: Chapter 2). For practical purposes we may call the unfree population of this category 'serfs', because they

resembled, in some ways, medieval serfs.<sup>9</sup> Some rather late ancient authors attempted to determine the differences between such serfs and slaves. These attempts do not amount to much, but make it clear that the two categories were not regarded as identical. Yet, all ancient definitions fail to clarify what modern scholars consider as most important: serfs were permitted some kind of family life, and some property rights (Cartledge 1987: 171). Apart from their psychological effects, what makes these rights significant from the modern point of view is their implications for the economy. Whereas slaves were, for the most part, bought through commercial transactions, serfs reproduced themselves through breeding (de Ste. Croix 1981: 231).

When it comes to figures pertaining to the economy of the ancient Greek world, the evidence is extremely thin. By resorting to common sense, however, we may assume that the differences in reproduction were important to city-economies at large. Even though most helots, as well as other types of serfs 'could have been living at or near the margin of subsistence' (Cartledge 1987: 174) (just like most slaves), the burden of their reproduction fell, exclusively, on the community itself. In the case of slaves, on the other hand, the burden of their reproduction would partly fall on a foreign community (see below). The Greeks, however, paid no attention to such calculations. They would occasionally point out that the Spartan helots belonged to the city not to individual masters (Strabo 8.5.4: 'in a way public'; Cartledge 1987: 171), but what mattered to them was that serfs were dominated by other people. In ideal societies, it was suggested, citizens should choose between slaves and helots depending upon their docility, not their productivity (cf. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.11). In common parlance, all types of serfs were often referred to by the Greeks simply as slaves (*douloi*).<sup>10</sup>

The case of artisans, wage-earners and other menial workers is even more instructive. There is clear evidence that labouring men often took pride in making a living or, better, in making a fortune through hard work. An Athenian litigant once informed his jurors that he had made a lot of money wearing out his own body in mining and by toil (Dem. 42.20; Ober 1989: 221). What makes this particular claim remarkable is that mining was normally reserved for the most unfortunate of slaves.

Wealthy Athenians thought otherwise. As some of their spokesmen claimed, all arts which 'deteriorate the condition of the body' as well as 'the industries that earn wages' and even, in some cases, 'the liberal sciences' were considered vulgar (*banauoi*) and held in disdain. Accordingly, all vulgar artisans were 'under a sort of limited slavery' (Arist. *Pol.* 1337b1–21, 1260b1–2; Xen. *Oec.* 4.2). We can understand why an art which caused the condition of the body to deteriorate was considered vulgar: it made the body look like the sort of bodies slaves were expected to have (Arist. *Pol.* 1254b28–31). But why were all industries that earn wages considered vulgar as well? In a sense, this was pure class-prejudice. What calls for an explanation, however, is the particular manner in which this prejudice was expressed.

The explanation is provided by Aristotle himself. Wage-earning industries were vulgar because 'they make the mind preoccupied and degraded'. It was not the nature of the tasks, nor the nature of the arts which led to undesirable results. It was the purpose for which they were performed that could make them vulgar and servile. If one follows a pursuit 'for the sake of oneself or for one's friends, or on moral grounds, it is not illiberal, but the man who follows the same pursuit because of other people would often appear to be acting in a menial (*thetikon*) and servile (*doulikon*) manner' (Arist. *Pol.* 1337b4–22).

By dividing labour into two distinct categories, according to whether it was performed for oneself or for another person, Aristotle (and probably many other thinkers as well), lost sight of the very idea of labour. We will look in vain for labour as a general concept in Aristotle. The dominant form of slave-exploitation mystified productive labour. Thus relations between employers and wage-earners were perceived through the master–slave polarity.

### III

The wealth of others was sometimes appropriated by use of pure force. Such were the cases of piracy and robbery. Much more important was the exploitation of the wealth of others through war (see below). The view that all the property, including the bodies of the victims of war, belonged justifiably to the victors was shared by almost all Greeks. 'It is a universal and eternal law', it was often claimed, 'that in a city taken during a war everything, including persons and property, belongs to the victor' (Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.73; Garlan 1987: 8).

That war had weighty repercussions on the economy of their cities must have been obvious to all Greeks. Financing a war or taking advantage of the spoils of war, whether directly or by imposing tributes, were topics often discussed by politicians (Thuc. 6.62.2–4). Historians also reflected on the relations between war and empire (cf. Austin 1993: 208–12; Finley 1985b). But ancient authors were mostly interested in discussing the effects of wealth gained through conquest upon the morale and the well being of the victor. The effects of war on the structure of the economy do not seem to have impressed the Greeks.

It was repeatedly stated that prisoners of war were reduced to slavery. Everybody knew that war was an important source of slaves. 'The art of war', says Aristotle,

will by nature be in a manner an art of acquisition (for the art of hunting is part of it) that is properly employed both against wild animals and against such of mankind as though designed by nature for subjection refuse to submit to it, inasmuch as this warfare is by nature just.

(Arist. *Pol.* 1256b23–6)

The evident inference that we would draw from this observation is that having been raised outside the community which was going to profit from their labour,

slaves would overall allow for a much higher degree of exploitation than slaves or serfs reproduced within the community. It does not matter much whether the Greeks had enslaved the prisoners they imported themselves, or whether they had bought them from foreigners who had been fighting against each other. Nor is it important to determine the exact proportion of imported slaves – although it is quite clear that the great majority of slaves in Greek cities were not of Greek origin (Garlan 1987: 12). Even if a relatively small proportion of slaves were former captives (in all likelihood the proportion was very large), they would have made the overall exploitation of slave-labour much more profitable.

The superior profitability of slavery, compared to serfdom (for which we do not find comments in ancient authors) may help to explain the rapid expansion of slave-economies in the Greek world, ever since they were invented around the sixth century BCE. According to Greek historians, what we call chattel-slavery had been invented in historical times. It was said that the Chians were the first to resort to the practice of buying barbarians as slaves (*argyronetos douleia*; Theopompus in Ath. 265b–c). Other Greeks were soon to follow.

The evidence from Athens allows us to consider the significance of a rather exceptional factor in the development of a slave-economy. Enslaved (or rather ‘enserfed’) Athenians had been liberated by the Solonian reforms. Big landlords were, therefore, ‘obliged’ to look for a cheap work-force elsewhere, and hence imported foreign slaves in large numbers (Finley 1998a: 154). Subsequently, other cities which never really passed through the Athenian (or possibly Chian) experience had before them a new and attractive model of labour-exploitation. Most cities, especially those with an advanced commerce, found the introduction of chattel-slaves feasible. Sparta and Thessaly with their large serf-populations did not.

By concentrating on domination, Greek historians and philosophers were unable to advance arguments of this type (see below). They explained serfdom as the result of conquest, and slavery as the result of war; but they had no explanation for the invention of an institution of buying and selling human beings, i.e. they could not explain how and why some prisoners of war became slaves – they just took the procedure for granted.

Greek authors did not discuss a further implication of war on the economy either. As several modern scholars emphasize, the spoils of war imported into a victorious community were not distributed evenly among the population. According to the prevailing conditions of particular communities, some of their members were able to profit from war much more than others. As has been shown repeatedly in the case of Athens (Millett 1993), and even in the case of Sparta (Hodkinson 1993), the redistribution of wealth (and power) effected through war had important consequences on the social structure of the respective cities. In Athens it may have been a stabilizing factor, in Sparta it may have increased inequality and led to crisis.

Thus, although the Greeks knew well that wars had economic results, it did not occur to them that war and the economy were structurally related. They

never fully understood that wars were essential for the reproduction of their slave economies. Consequently, they failed to ask themselves whether the cause of many of their wars was not honour or the desire to dominate others, but the need to exploit others.

#### IV

Taxes, liturgies and fines were recognized ways of extracting unpaid contributions from the wealth of others (Jones 1974: 153; Osborne 1991b). Regarding such payments, the Greeks seem to have had mixed feelings. Once more, our evidence comes mostly from Athens, but some snippets of information survive from a number of cities. Direct taxes imposed upon various groups of people on a regular basis, such as the poll-tax paid by the metics of Athens (the *metoikion*), and also taxes imposed upon traders and prostitutes or upon various kinds of activities, such as imports and exports, were considered by Athenian citizens as normal and justified. War-taxes, such as the property-tax (*eisphora*) in Athens and other cities, were also considered indispensable, although burdensome. More fuss was made about direct taxes imposed (exclusively) upon rich citizens. Complaints against the liturgies in Athens, especially after becoming obligatory, are well documented. Liturgies and other such taxes or fines were regarded by some as a fiscal exploitation of the rich. Isocrates (8.128) claimed that, 'the liturgies and all the nuisances connected with the symmories and with exchanges of property' were so annoying that, 'those who have means find life more burdensome than those who are continually in want'. Such complaints were, as a rule, unjustified (Jones 1957: 55–8). It seems best to regard liturgies and other taxes imposed upon the rich Athenians as modes of redistributing part of the surplus-wealth already extracted from other sections of the population (Ober 1989: 241).

The objections of the wealthy against taxation are understandable. The rich were not happy to contribute part of their wealth for the benefit of the poor ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.13), unless this was done on a voluntary basis – in which case it would increase their prestige (*timê*). What is less understandable is the reluctance of almost all cities to make arrangements for direct and regular income or property taxes, such as are considered indispensable in modern times. The case is even more perplexing when we consider the evidence of the late fourth century. At that time, most Greek cities were increasingly short of funds for financing their public activities. The issue was widely discussed among politicians and philosophers. From what was said, it appears that direct taxation might have actually been more of an ideological than a practical problem.

A member of the Peripatetic school made a collection of instances 'adopted by certain statesmen in times past for the replenishment of the treasury' in the belief that this was 'by no means lacking in utility' as such ideas could be applied from time to time by others. From his collection we learn about a great variety of taxes imposed occasionally by Greek authorities – although not all details



can be verified, and many seem quite impossible. The information provided reveals mostly the *naïveté* of the authorities, but also their ingenuity. It is clear that inventiveness was not the problem of ancient politicians. Under Hippias, births were taxed in Athens and so were deaths ([Arist.] *Oec.* 1347a15–18). Someone thought of imposing taxes on hair-cuts ([Arist.] *Oec.* 1348a29–34). Debasement of the currency was also implemented, by replacing silver-coins either with tin or with copper-coins ([Arist.] *Oec.* 1349a33–6, 1350a24–30). Others thought of taxing acts of piety ([Arist.] *Oec.* 1353b20–6). The most common way of taxing the citizens of a city was by cheating them.

It may be inferred that cities and statesmen resorted to such taxes almost exclusively under conditions of severe strain. More significantly, initiatives were normally attributed to tyrants. Direct taxation, it seems, was considered as pertaining to oppressive circumstances or regimes. When it was imposed in democratic cities, the ‘victims’ were mostly non-citizens, such as the metics of Athens. But then the *metoikion* was meant to symbolize the inferiority of metics (Austin and Vidal-Naquet 1977: 121). The same holds true for traders, not to mention prostitutes. They were considered as inferior to landowners. Consequently, wealthy Athenian citizens might have been complaining against liturgies not because they were exceedingly heavy, but because they implied a dominating attitude by ‘someone else’ – in this case, by the commoners (the *demos*). Contributing on a voluntary basis was something to make rich Athenians boastful and proud (Ober 1989: 226). Xenophon (*Poroi* 3.4–5) suggested that if merchants were honoured by the city, they would more readily pay their taxes. This mentality may be explained, at least partly, by the experience of slave and serf-exploitation. Voluntary redistribution of surplus-wealth could be desirable. Taxing surplus-wealth was, in effect, considered as a form of domination which should be rejected in principle, even when it was moderate. Wealthy citizens who had to pay taxes were, in Isocrates’ (8.125) view ‘worse off than those who are slaves to oligarchy’.

Free peasants did not normally pay direct taxes – at least in Athens. Their most significant contribution to the city was conscription. Conscription has quite rightly been considered by modern scholars as a form of exploitation (de Ste. Croix 1981: 206). Interestingly, (Athenian) peasants did not complain about serving in the army, as Roman peasants often did. Military service was regarded by them as a means for profit as well as a privilege which marked their difference from slaves.

## VI

A widely held view among the Greeks was that commercial transactions should be – and often were – equally beneficial to both parties. The Greeks obviously knew that traders made profits – sometimes great profits. But, Aristotle apart, no ancient author ever cared to comment seriously on the nature of such profits. The essence of commerce was seen as ‘buying cheap and selling dear’ (Xen. *Mem.*



3.7.6). As both parties were free to accept or reject what was being offered to them, it would appear that no one was being cheated – unless, like Glaukos, he was robbed of his wits in exchanging golden armour for bronze (Hom. *Il.* 6.234–6; von Reden 1995). Such views seem to have covered not only barter and retail between immediate producers (*kapelike*), which might have actually been for all practical purposes non-exploitative, but also large-scale trade (*emporia*), including long-distance commercial exchange. To explain an exceptionally great profit of Samian merchants, Herodotus (4.152) referred his readers to the fact that they had discovered a place which had never before been defiled (*akeratos*). The secret was in the place, not in human relations (Millett 1990).

There is a story in Herodotus which may appear outlandish. However, the historian actually seems to be saying that some strange 'Libyans' had achieved what all civilized people would, or should, wish. The Karchedonians, we are told, traded with some natives living beyond the Pillars of Herakles in the following manner: On reaching a certain place in Libya, they

unload their cargo, then having laid it orderly along the beach they go aboard their ships and light a smoking fire. The people of the country see the smoke, and coming to the sea they lay down gold to pay for the cargo and withdraw away from the wares. Then the Karchedonians disembark and examine the gold; if it seems to them a fair price for their cargo, they take it and go their ways; but if not, they go aboard again and wait, and the people come back and add more gold till the shipmen are satisfied.

(Hdt. 4.196)

Herodotus' comment to this strange story is that 'herein neither party (it is said) defrauds the other'. There was complete honesty on either side (Hdt. 4.196).

The Greeks treated commerce, to a large extent, as a moral issue. They insisted that commercial transactions were, or should be, equally beneficial to both parties and conducted with fairness. Profit called for no explanation. More perplexed with the idea of commercial profit was the Persian king Cyrus. According to Herodotus, Cyrus was also preoccupied with morality and honesty, but he at least felt that profit could not be something that just occurs. As he saw it, the Greeks had special meeting places in the centre of their cities, where they 'perjure themselves and deceive each other'. Commercial profit was the result of cheating (Hdt. 1.153).

There was one type of commercial transaction, however, which was regarded by the Greeks as extracting from the buyer more than was actually proper. Aristotle calls this type of transaction a 'monopoly of marketable goods'. In such cases, as he implies, buyers had no alternative, being, so to speak, forced to pay almost any price for what they needed. A monopoly, according to Aristotle, is a device with universal applicability: 'hence even some states have recourse to this plan as a method of raising revenue when short of funds' (Arist.

*Pol.* 1259a6–37). Several examples of monopolies have been recorded ([Arist.] *Oec.* book 2).

By analysing monopolies, Aristotle came close to understanding the element of inequality involved in all commercial transactions. But this was not his way of looking into the problems of the economy. Instead, he divided all transactions into voluntary and involuntary. Of the former type he gives the following examples: selling, buying, lending at interest, pledging, lending without interest, depositing, letting for hire. The latter type he subdivided into furtive, such as theft, adultery, poisoning, procuring, the enticement of slaves (*doulapatia*), assassination (*dolophonia*), bearing false witness, and violent, such as assault, imprisonment, murder (*thanatos*), robbery with violence (*harpagē*), maiming, abusive language, and contumelious treatment (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1131a2–9). Monopolies yielded profits because they were a form of involuntary transaction.

Regarding ‘justice’ in voluntary transactions, Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 1132b 16–20) argued that it ‘is a mean between gain and loss in a sense: it is to have after the transaction an amount equal to the amount one had before it’. Therefore, ‘in the interchange of services, justice, in the form of reciprocity, is the bond that maintains the association’. But reciprocity, he explains, ‘on the basis of proportion, not on the basis of equality’. ‘The very existence of the city depends on proportionate reciprocity’ (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1132b31–5). Following the principle of ‘proportionate requital’, ‘the builder shall receive from the shoemaker a portion of the product of his labour (*ergon*), and give him a portion of the product of his own’ (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1133a8–10).

Aristotle’s idea of proportionate reciprocity is not easy to grasp and has caused great trouble to modern commentators (Meikle 1995b). But the least plausible approach is to seek in Aristotle’s formulations some kind of theory of labour. Thus, when he writes that as ‘a builder is to a shoemaker, so must such and such a number of shoes be to a house’, he is clearly not thinking in terms of the labour embodied in the products. Such would be the case only if ‘an association for the interchange of services’ is formed between two physicians. It is a different matter when an association is formed between a physician and a farmer, ‘and generally between persons who are different, and who may be unequal, though in that case they have to be equalized’ (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1133a16–24). ‘There will therefore be reciprocal proportion’, Aristotle suggests, ‘when the products have been equated, so that as a farmer is to shoemaker, so may the shoemaker’s product (*ergon*) be to the farmer’s product’ (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1133a33–5). The problem was not so much to determine the value of labour or of its product. It was to determine the value of the producer.

We need not go into further details as Aristotle makes at least this point clear – although many modern scholars have refused to admit what they read: ‘And there will be the same equality between the shares’, he explains, ‘as between the persons, since the ratio between the shares will be equal to the ratio between the persons; for if the persons are not equal, they will not have equal shares’ (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1131a21–3).

Aristotle did not come close to formulating a theory of labour because he had no understanding of labour as a general concept. Slave-labour was of a different nature from the labour of a free person. The labour of a free person working for another person was of a different nature from the labour of a free person working for him/her self and so on.

Aristotle's understanding of the function of money was related to the problem of equating what was by nature unequal. 'It is to meet this requirement', he writes, 'that men have introduced money; money constitutes, in a manner, a middle term, for it is a measure of all things, and so of their superior or inferior value, that is to say, how many shoes are equivalent to a house or to a given quantity of food' (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1133a20–2). But although money, according to Aristotle, 'was brought into existence for the purpose of exchange', through interest, the amount of money itself increases. Accordingly, 'usury is most reasonably hated, because its gain comes from money itself and not from that for the sake of which money was invented' (Arist. *Pol.* 1258b2–4; von Reden 1995: 184–7).

In the ancient Greek world, which was mainly agricultural, not commercial, use-value predominated over exchange-value – to recall another Aristotelian theoretical formulation (Arist. *Pol.* 1257a6–9). In such societies, the circulation of money – a commodity with exchange-value but without any use-value of its own, as one could be well supplied with money and yet die of hunger (Arist. *Pol.* 1257b15) – could have been considered by some as perverse or contrary to nature. When money was able to bring in even more money, the perversity became hateful. We do not know how popular this view was, but it was not Aristotle's alone.

Aristotle's approach did not take into account investment. Some borrowers would have been borrowing money for consumption, but money was also used for productive purposes. The inference that most loans in Athens were made for the purpose of consumption has been challenged – in my view convincingly (Cohen 1992: 30–6). Furthermore, apart from maritime loans which were clearly predominantly productive, consumer loans may also be considered as ultimately productive, even if their sole purpose was to improve the image or to increase the honour of the borrower – and this was not their sole purpose (Foxhall 1994b). A person's *timê* was, in a sense, part of his/her wealth. Money could be used to purchase land and slaves. Land and slaves could increase production, as Ischomachos' father was reported to have done (Xen. *Poroi* 4.17; *Oec.* 20.22–6). Of this new production, a proportion would be given back in the form of interest. In our own modern view, money does not produce money; investment, i.e., production, does.

This 'simple' way of putting things was totally absent from Aristotle's thought. He regarded slavery as an institution in accordance with nature, but as he could not 'see' that (at least some) slaves were producing new use-values, he condemned money-lending, even for the purpose of buying slaves, as contrary to nature. The world he was living in could not even conceptualize loans and

borrowing as abstract categories. What mattered most was not interest rates, but social relations. There was interest-free lending and there was lending at exceedingly high rates depending (among other things) upon the social status of the parties involved.

## VII

A large, perhaps the largest part of the free population in most cities were peasants living near subsistence level – in Sparta we should include the *perioikoi* as well. It is conceivable, as has been suggested, that numerous small producers were neither exploiting the labour of others nor were themselves exploited to any marked degree (de Ste. Croix 1981: 33). However, conscription apart, many of these producers would be paying rents of some sort or another. There is evidence, not only from Athens, that land was being leased on a rather large scale (Osborne 1988), and rent was certainly a way for extracting surplus production.

Inter-city relations should be also taken into account. For a long period during the fifth and the fourth centuries, the Athenians were conscious of having a privileged position in the Greek world and beyond. Their city did not only benefit financially from its foreign trade, it also made use of tributes paid in by its allies, for as long as its empire lasted (Nixon and Price 1990). Imposing tributes on allies was a topic widely discussed by politicians, long after the practice had ceased. Income coming from foreign trade would have been distributed in a way promoting inequality among the population of Athens – although many taxes, such as import and export-taxes went to the city. But tributes were, for the most part, common property of the Athenians ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.15–8; Garnsey 1988: 120–33). The position of Athenian peasants was therefore affected by the privileged position of their city. To put it crudely, it is possible to think of Athenian peasants as benefiting from the exploitation of peasants living in other cities.

That Athens had been exploiting her allies was well acknowledged (Plut. *Per.* 12). The expression used by Isocrates (*lambano epikarpia*) is as close as one would wish to the notion of exploitation. But this relationship was mostly discussed for its political, not its economic consequences. More interestingly, relations between cities in such cases were perceived in the light of the master and slave metaphor. Allies had become slaves to the Athenian *demos*, the Old Oligarch exclaimed ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.18). Athenians, according to Isocrates (8.125, 134), should not give allies over to their generals ‘to do with as they please, and not exercise (their) leadership as masters but as helpers’.

## VIII

I turn last to the case of women. The inferior position of women in the ancient Greek world has been proclaimed by ancient and modern scholars alike. The problem which has been posed is to evaluate this inferior position and to

consider whether it amounted to exploitation (de Ste. Croix 1981: 98ff.). This issue cannot be tackled in a simple manner. The indiscriminate formulations which are common in the literature will not suffice. More recently the case of women has been dealt with in much more sophisticated ways, which demonstrate that we still have a long way to go (Winkler 1990; Hunter 1994; Foxhall 1996b).

We can expect little aid from most ancient authors. Aristotle deals with women within the framework of his general understanding of human relations: 'For the male is by nature better fitted to command than the female (except in some cases where their union has been formed contrary to nature)' (Arist. *Pol.* 1259a2–3). But Aristotle could hardly be thinking of all women, as many modern scholars believe. Female slaves belonged to the category of slaves, not of women – a mistress was, obviously, better fitted to command than a male slave – whereas female metics and poor peasants were out of Aristotle's sight. Widows and other categories of women, such as the *hetairai*, would hardly be included in Aristotle's sweeping definition.

Hesiod was actually much closer to the real world. The two major female characters in his farmer's household are clearly kept apart. The first one is treated like a slave and aids the farmer in the fields; the second is brought into the household as a wife and is destined to remain as safely as possible indoors (Hes. *Op.* 405–9, cf. 602–3; 695–705). It seems reasonable to assume that the lower down the social scale we look, the less women were differentiated from their menfolk. What we are told about the inferior position of women as women is applicable mostly to the upper classes (de Ste. Croix 1981: 100–1). Wealthy women would bring to their husbands large dowries exercising, themselves, little or no control over them. It is mostly in such cases, I believe, that we could think of male-female relations in terms of economic exploitation.

Leaving aside the real world and turning again to Aristotle, we realize that in his way of thinking, the very idea of women-exploitation is once more meaningless. There are by nature, he argues, various classes of rulers and ruled. 'For the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the man the child in a different way' (Arist. *Pol.* 1260a9–10). Like slaves, women were dominated (ruled), not exploited. Besides, as Xenophon argues in his *Oeconomicus*, husbands and wives were the basic unit of a household contributing to its wealth in complementary, not antagonistic ways.

## IX

I have discussed various types of social relations which most of us would consider as involving exploitation and, therefore, would also examine through their economic significance. Following mainly Aristotle, who may have been in these particular instances representative of the dominant Greek mentality (i.e., the mentality of the dominant classes), I have argued that the idea of exploitation as a general economic category in human relations was absent in ancient Greek

thought. What Aristotle and other authors stressed instead was domination. In some cases the idea of domination was analysed in such a way as to exclude exploitation (e.g., slavery, women). But even when some kind of 'exploitation' was acknowledged (e.g., taxation, tributes, monopoly), it was presented as a by-product of domination.

This difference in approach may have been influenced by the widespread master and slave relations. Being the property of their owners, slaves were not seen as productive labourers. All they possessed and all they produced were thought to belong, by definition, to the master. When the issue was raised, what mattered was not that slaves were deprived of the products of their labour, but that they belonged to other human beings. This way of looking at things was reinforced by the fact that households functioned as units. Specifying the contribution of individual members (including slaves) to the household economy was of little or no interest. Consequently, topics that we would examine as aspects of the economy, the Greeks examined as aspects of politics or ethics. And instead of seeking profit-maximization, the Greeks were mostly after honour-maximization.

By treating economic relations through their political implication, ancient Greek thinkers, I would add, had a restricted view of politics as well. To evaluate the various constitutions (one of the most important topics of his *Politics*), Aristotle referred his readers to the composition of the citizen body. The differences between the several kinds of democracies and oligarchies he explained as resulting from the relative strength of social groupings, which he arranged according to their trade or skill (farmers, artisans, traders, wage-labourers) (Arist. *Pol.* 1317a16 ff., 1321a5–6). This approach led him to valuable, and still admirable, insights (de Ste. Croix 1981: 77). Groups of people involved in different trades or skills have different interests and try to influence the political system accordingly. But this is not to say that Aristotle analysed constitutions according to the relative importance of productive modes. He analysed them according to the relative importance of various types of citizens. Hence, what Aristotle did not take into account was that constitutions differed also (and more significantly) according to the relative importance of the various ways in which surplus-labour was extracted from unfree labourers: slaves, serfs and debt-bondsmen. By contrast, few modern scholars would analyse the differences between Athenian and Spartan societies, for example, without considering that the production of goods depended heavily upon the work of slaves and helots respectively.

The way in which surplus-production was extracted in the ancient Greek world from unfree labourers did not only mystify aspects of the economy by subordinating them to politics; it obscured important aspects of politics as well.

## NOTES

- 1 All translations of ancient authors are from the Loeb editions. By 'extraction' I mean appropriation of wealth or labour which may or may not involve force; but I exclude voluntary offerings, such as gifts, alms or sacrifices to gods. I also exclude the maintenance of children or the elderly members of households. For a comprehensive discussion of some of the theoretical and practical problems, I refer to de Ste. Croix 1981: 31–111, 205–77 with bibliography.
- 2 Contrast (the philosopher) Hegel 1977: 238, who emphasizes the significance of the appropriation of the labour of the slave by the master.
- 3 The distinction between productive and non-productive services is somewhat misleading. Services which make the life of producers easier may be considered themselves as pertaining to production.
- 4 Cf. Epictetus 4.1.37: 'While in slavery, 'someone else kept me in clothes, and shoes, and supplied me with food, and nursed me when I was sick; I served him in only a few matters.'
- 5 Pomeroy 1994: 58 attributes this type of household production to patriarchy 'as an economic system in which the male who heads the *oikos* appropriates the labour of his wife, children, and slaves'. This is correct from our own point of view, but the Greeks did not see any 'appropriation' in this relationship. As they saw it, all that was produced in a household belonged to the household. Cf. Hunter 1996.
- 6 Political and moral issues seem to have been closely linked in classical Greece, and were sometimes indistinguishable.
- 7 I take the *Athēnaion Politeia* to be a work of Aristotle, but the arguments against this view are also strong, see Rhodes 1981: 61–3.
- 8 Interestingly, Aristotle did not care to specify whether they retained, or whether they paid, one sixth of their produce; later authors who tried to clarify this point contradict each other.
- 9 Cf. de Ste. Croix 1981: 135–6, 267–9, who insists, convincingly in my view, that there is no necessary connection between ancient serfdom and medieval feudalism; also de Ste. Croix 1988.
- 10 Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1264a36, who refers to *heiloteia*, *penesteia* and *douleia* in one breath.



# THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GREEK SLAVERY<sup>1</sup>

*Paul Cartledge*

## I

Over a quarter of a century ago, Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman rocked the world of modern slave studies. In their two-volume *Time on the Cross* (1974) they made bold to claim that slave ownership and the exploitation of slave labour power in the antebellum Old South had been some thirty-five per cent more profitable, man for man, unit of production for unit of production, than the exploitation of free labour in the North. This was of course not only *academically* shocking, but also *politically* shocking. In the world's richest country, a country whose economic and spiritual life was based around the notion of profit-making, it was being argued that the war which had been represented by the Union as one for the *freedom* of the Old South *from* slavery had in fact been economically *irrational*. The claim was of course disputed, on technical academic grounds among others; it has not been and perhaps cannot ever be substantiated (Fogel and Engerman 1974, cf. M. Smith 1998). But it did none the less put the issue of the profitability of slave labour firmly at the centre of US slave studies once more – in a way that it never has been, and possibly never can be, at the centre of *ancient Greek* slave studies.<sup>2</sup>

Still, the profitability question does involve many of the most important aspects of the study of Greek slavery and is for that reason alone worth re-opening here. This chapter is thus concerned to explore both the political economy (see further below, text and n. 4) of slavery in classical Greece more generally, and, within that wider framework, the extent to which slavery in its various forms was profitable – whether undertaken precisely to make a profit, or undertaken for other reasons but also found to be at least viable economically, if not necessarily always hugely lucrative. I begin here, as I would normally want to start any study of ancient Greek slavery, comparatively – that is by drawing on the literature of slave studies of other times, places, social formations and historic epochs.<sup>3</sup> And I therefore open with a quotation, not from an ancient Greek source, but from a founding father (or forefather) of the modern discipline of economics:



Slaves are very seldom inventive, and all the most important improvements either in machinery or in the arrangement and distribution of work which facilitate or abridge labour, have been the discoveries of freemen.

(Adam Smith 1970 [1776])

Thus Adam Smith in his groundbreaking *Wealth of Nations*, mustering all the contempt that he could as an enlightened gentleman opposed, like Edward Gibbon and increasing numbers of the intelligentsia of the British empire, to slavery and the slave trade (cf. Heilbroner 1991: 41–74; Morley 1998). Smith wrote, indeed pioneered political economy, a potent mix of what we would call economic theory, political sociology and moral philosophy; ‘economics’ so labelled had to wait a further century, for Alfred Marshall’s mint-new coinage (Marshall 1920; cf. Heilbroner 1991: 209–11). A new word, a new mental world. Whereas early-modern political economists of the late eighteenth century had not thought to disjoin economics from politics and indeed morals, by the late nineteenth century Economics (capital E) was another of the new human ‘sciences’, a technique and discipline with its own jargon, societies, journals, and so forth. To continue to write ‘political economy’ in the nineteenth, let alone the twentieth, century was to be either old-fashioned or anti-establishment, if not revolutionary, in a Marxian vein.<sup>4</sup>

In antiquity, however, there was no such choice between ‘political economy’ and ‘economics’. Aristotle, systematizer of all the then recognized branches of learning and knowledge, pointedly did not write on ‘economics’. For him, as for Xenophon before him and all ancient writers after him, *oikonomia* meant first and foremost the management of a private household (*oikos*); only rarely was that word extended metaphorically – as we today occasionally use the term ‘housekeeping’ – to larger units, including both individual Greek cities and the multi-national empire of the Persians. And there was no other word: ancient cities did not have, or rather were not considered to have, ‘economies’ in a modern sense.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, Aristotle for once was not the leader in this branch of scholarly discourse. He tussled with the most difficult theoretical questions on offer, of course, such as exchange value, but he did so in his political-ethical treatises, and even there not as a matter of the utmost priority. Profit-seeking money-making (*chrêmatistikê*), indeed, he dismissed as a morally second-rate activity, well below the level achievable through the *praxis* of *politikê technê*.<sup>6</sup> So, the ‘standard’ ancient work in the field was and remained Xenophon’s *Oikonomikos* (translated by Cicero, cited by Columella): a treatise on the good, that is morally sound as well as economically prudent, management of the large estate of a fictional (or at least fictionalized) rich Athenian of the turn of the fifth and fourth centuries.<sup>7</sup> The overriding relevance of this work for our current concerns is that an estate such as his was assumed to be worked typically and primarily by slave labour.<sup>8</sup>

## II

Our modern understanding of the ancient (Greek, Roman, Graeco-Roman) economy probably owes most to Moses Finley's work of that title, misunderstood and controversial though it remains.<sup>9</sup> This was an intervention not so much into the long-running debate between the so-called 'Modernizers' and 'Primitivists' but rather into that between the 'Substantivists' and 'Formalists', a sort of re-run of the nineteenth-century quarrel between political economists and economists tout court. Finley, following Richard Thurnwald and Karl Polanyi, saw the ancient economy as 'embedded' in ancient sociopolitical relations and social consciousness (especially that of the moving and shaking elites) in ways that made it unsusceptible to economic analysis properly so called using the tools of the neo-classical economists and their subsequent refinements.

On the other hand, Finley did argue that the very existence, indeed the central or fundamental importance, of slavery to Greek society and civilization was a mark of the Greeks' 'primitivism' in one sense. Or at any rate that there was some causal connection between the disdain of at least the Greek elites for applying technology to economic improvement and progress and their preference for reliance on man-power.<sup>10</sup> This went, he believed, with a mindset common from one end of Antiquity to the other – hence the appropriateness of the singular 'the ancient economy' – that did not disdain profit altogether by any means (indeed, depended on agricultural or other surpluses for maintaining its elite leisured lifestyle) but worried greatly about the moral accompaniments of profitmaking and did not actively seek to maximize profits whenever and wherever they could be.

Ancient Greek slaveholding, on this attractive view, might well be thought to fit very nicely into a schema more of peasant-style satisficing (below) than of capitalist-style maximizing enterprise, at least as that has been controversially re-interpreted by Fogel and Engerman (1974, also Engerman 1999). There is of course the danger here of committing the cardinal sin of crude comparativism, applying to ancient Greece skewed evidence from other slave systems. Slavery in Greece was not the same (even) as slavery at Rome, let alone the Old South, in both of which it formed part of a global economic system undreamed of by Greeks before (at earliest) the conquests of Alexander the Great.<sup>11</sup> There were no Greek equivalents of super-rich imperial slaves/freedmen or slaves owning loads of other slaves (*vicarii*) and few equivalents of the wealthy slave or freedmen businessmen, traders, manufacturers, etc., whom we meet in the pages of Petronius and elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> There were no Greek equivalents to cotton, tobacco or sugar, no triangular trade and so forth; and the economic role of the wine-, oil- and grain-trades was quite different in the first-century BCE/CE Roman empire and in the fifth/fourth-century Greek world.

Further dangers lurk. Despite Finley's singular 'ancient economy', there was, in fact, no such thing as a single 'Greek economy', let alone 'Greek society', but rather more than one thousand often very different, and self-differentiated Greek

political entities with radically different social and economic infrastructures. There were, and are, finally, no Greek statistics. The 'numbers game' may sometimes be no more than that, but here we are desperately short of quantifiable data of any kind, let alone the statistically significant variety.

Nevertheless, the economic dimension of Greek slavery cannot be simply overlooked, despite all these caveats and obstacles. These latter may have meant that slavery in Greece has often been regarded 'primarily as a social institution', but that, as Wiedemann (1997: 31) goes on to add, 'does not imply that no important economic consequences flowed from it'. In what follows I shall attempt at least to set some broad, non-quantitative parameters of its likely economic profitability in the one city where chattel slavery – as opposed to Spartan helotage and other 'archaic' forms of labour regimes – is tolerably well-documented: Athens.<sup>13</sup>

### III

Let us begin by setting the development of Athenian chattel slavery in a wider context. It is an elementary fact that from the beginning of recorded Greek documentary history, in the Mycenaean Linear B tablets from Pylos and other sites, slaves formed a substantial part of the workforce. The Homeric poems, which purport to be set in what we call the Mycenaean era, in fact offer but a pale reflection of the huge numbers of slaves at work in the Pylian and other centralized palace economies of the Mycenaean Late Bronze Age (Hooker 1995: 11–12). From Homer to Aristotle slave or unfree labour was a constant in all known types and forms of Greek economic practice, agricultural, industrial or domestic (Schlaifer 1968).

One sure sign of its central importance, noted as such by Moses Finley, is the extraordinary richness of Greek terminology for such labour: *douloi*, *oiketai*, and *andrapoda* are just the three most common of a dozen terms used in all.<sup>14</sup> However, the crucial distinction between a society with slaves and a slave society, also insisted upon by Finley, is sometimes subtle and hard to draw. Relevant differentiating factors include the following three: absolute numbers of slaves, relative proportions of slave and free, but above all the social location of the slaves, that is the contribution made by their labour to the surpluses on which rest the wealth, power and lifestyle of the economically dominant group(s) or class(es) in a society.<sup>15</sup> In the case of Classical Greece, that means those (mainly citizens) who were sufficiently 'rich', typically in land, not to have to work for a living and were therefore necessarily using, that is exploiting, the labour power of others, ideally and above all (but not only) that of chattel slaves.<sup>16</sup>

It is generally agreed that on those criteria fifth- and fourth-century classical Athens was indeed a slave society. We shall consider in the next section how and why that may have come about. For the moment it will be enough to note the 'naturalness' of the idea of exploiting slave labour, an integral part of the classical

Greek mindset, as that is exemplified in an anecdote, no doubt largely if not wholly fictional, concerning a meeting between Socrates and the *hetaira* with the given or more probably working name of Theodote ('God's Gift'). The story as told by Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* (3.11) is not usually read as a source for Athenian economic history, but one passage from it makes it serve that purpose extremely well, indeed exceptionally so, as it is incidental to the story's main thrust (or thrusts).<sup>17</sup>

Xenophon's faux-naïf Socrates was struck by how well set up and got up were not only Theodote herself but also her mother and the house in which she lived (whether she owned it or not, is not stated – presumably, as a metic, she did not); and he noted too her entourage of pretty female household servants (slaves). Affecting not to know the true source of her income, Socrates asks first whether she owns a farm (*agros*), or, if not that, a tenement house for letting (*sunoiikia*), or perhaps some skilled craftsmen slaves. On receiving negative replies to each, he confesses himself baffled – until Theodote coyly reveals the economic basis of her affluent lifestyle to be the 'gifts' of her 'friends'.

Rarely can a prostitute's income have been so delicately disguised.<sup>18</sup> But for us the passage's main interest lies in the implication of Socrates' questions: that for a rich inhabitant of central Athens in the late fifth century (the dialogue's dramatic date) the normal and openly recognized sources of his or her disposable wealth, probably in that descending order of magnitude, were: (i) a large farm (the labour force is unfortunately not specified – but see above for the estate of Ischomachos in another work of Xenophon, the *Oeconomicus*); (ii) a tenement house (typically used as a lodging-house for temporary residents, both Athenian and foreign, or as a slave-staffed brothel);<sup>19</sup> and (iii) skilled slave craftsmen (see below). At least one, probably two and possibly all three of those sources involved centrally the exploitation of slave labour power.

How rational was this? First, let us distinguish modern from ancient economic rationality, in broad-brush terms. Modern rationality typically involves seeking a maximum return on the investment of capital, achieving the most efficient use of scarce resources (including human resources), and employing the most advanced technical methods – of technology, finance, accountancy and so forth. Ancient economic rationality, for most free inhabitants of the ancient world, meant almost the exact opposite. For most inhabitants of classical Greece were in some sense peasant farmers, and they, like peasants anywhere and at any time, pursued minimum-risk strategies in a process that has been labelled 'risk-buffering'.<sup>20</sup> Rather than profit-maximization, the overall goal of most peasants was one of 'satisficing': enough was as good as a feast, and a lot safer in the circumstances than going for (literally) broke.

For the rich elite, however, the goal might be very different and much closer to that described as 'modern' above, subject to the constraints imposed by a pre-scientific, pre-industrial, pre-capitalist economy. This elite goal is what might be called a *rentier* ideal, one that was dependent for its realization on income from the labour of others.<sup>21</sup> For the ancient Greek rich, in other words, the economic

considerations brought to bear on for example the purchase of more land or more slaves might approximate, more nearly, to those of a capitalist entrepreneur of our day, *mutatis mutandis*.

Unfortunately, though, we are in no good position to assess the rationality of the ancient Greek slaveholding rich elite in practical terms. This is due to the – irremediable – lack of requisitely quantifiable ('cliometric') ancient data. Thus we have no regular price series for the cost of purchase, cost of maintenance, or amortization of slaves (though we do have some individual figures, and isolated series, their specific interpretation and wider significance are disputed); and we have no figures for calculating the efficiency of slave-use (relevant variables would include labour-inputs, e.g., work in gangs; technological improvements; costs of supervision; size of estates; type of crops; manumission incentives; and slave-mortality).

It is easy enough to point out the absurdities of the few global figures that our extant ancient literary sources provide; for example the 400,000 slaves supposedly registered in a census at Athens in the penultimate decade of the fourth century is probably out by a factor of at least four.<sup>22</sup> Much harder is to decide how to read Thucydides' far more realistic-seeming figure of 'more than two times 10,000, the (or 'a') great part of whom were skilled manual workers', in a passage (Thuc. 7.27–8) referring to the slaves who ran away from Attica between 413 and 404, during the closing phase of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>23</sup> Assuming, plausibly, that most had been associated with the silver-mining operations of the Laureion district, both above and below ground, where did that leave the rest of the servile labour force? Modern guesstimates have of course been attempted, sometimes using what are optimistically called 'proxy data' from other, more reliably documented slave societies or servile systems. But these do not take us all that far, even if they do raise interesting questions, or set firm limits to speculation, about the likely gender and age ratios. We shall return to these questions later.<sup>24</sup>

We gave above the economic criteria for the definition of a slave society, as opposed to a society with slaves. We may now legitimately add, as entirely applicable to the case of classical Athens, a non-economic criterion, namely mentality. Apart from such passages as the Theodote anecdote (above) that assume the 'naturalness' of the use of slave-labour, perhaps the most telling evidence is Aristotle's qualitative association of slavery as a necessary enabling factor with *praxis* (how to be a rounded free citizen Greek) rather than with *poiesis* (brute economic production, of which even slaves were of course capable). That speaks loudly to the typical upper-class Greek's mentality (Cartledge 1997: chapter 6). But even Aristotle does also categorize slaves economically, labelling them as 'tools with a soul', that is instruments of production, and that, surely, is how many if not most rich Greeks typically saw their slaves most of the time (de Ste. Croix 1981: 58 and n. 12). Especially perhaps rich Athenians: since they found themselves numerically disadvantaged within a democratic citizen body and more or less compelled to contribute 'liturgically' to the common pool, to

them the surplus wealth to be derived from slaveholding mattered at least as much as the prestige and honour associated with the practice (Osborne 1991b).

#### IV

The next question is, how had that Athenian slave society come into being? Three conditions, as a general rule, would seem to have to be satisfied: first, the pre-existence of an economic system based on inequality, especially – given the fundamentally rural and agrarian context of ancient Greece – inequality of landholding; second, the potential to acquire slaves of sufficient quality in sufficient numbers at the right price; and, third, a perceived need to do so, caused, for example, by a shortage of alternative forms of biddable or coercible labour. Post-Solonian Athens, arguably, satisfied all three conditions (though how soon cannot be determined).

First, although the precise nature of the economic crisis Solon was called upon to solve in c.590 BCE is still and probably will remain hotly debated (cf. Morris, this volume), it is not in question that there was some kind of struggle going on between rich and poor Athenians, and that some at least of the latter had found themselves sold into slavery beyond the borders of Attica.<sup>25</sup> Nor is it disputed that what Solon represented as one of his key measures in his legislative package, collectively known as the *Seisachtheia* or ‘Shaking-off of Burdens’, involved the prohibition for the future of the securing of loans to free Athenian citizens on the security of the person. Thus following the enactment of Solon’s legislative package Athenian citizens might no longer be legally enslaved for defaulting and kept as slaves within Attica.<sup>26</sup>

To that extent, Solon was concerned centrally to draw the line sharply between free labour and unfree labour (compulsory, involuntary, dependent, forced, or coerced, that is, by extra- or non-economic factors), and to prevent Athenian citizens from suffering any one of the three main kinds of unfreedom: debt-bondage and, *a fortiori*, serfdom and chattel slavery.<sup>27</sup> It seems clear, too, that inequality of landholding lay at the root of the matter: some poor Athenians were calling for redistribution of the (privately held) land, a revolutionary demand in later periods at any rate and one that the moderate Solon declined at least formally to implement.<sup>28</sup>

Second, the development of economic, military and political conditions in the eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea basins as a whole during the archaic period was such that slaves (usually non-Greeks, later called derogatorily ‘barbarians’) were first becoming regularly available to mainland Greek would-be slaveholders in bulk through commercial slave-trading channels from the turn of the seventh and sixth centuries.<sup>29</sup> The island of Chios, just off the Anatolian coast, was nicely situated to take advantage of this trend, and the development of Chian export-driven viticulture, necessarily a labour-intensive operation that benefited especially the large landowners, may well be owed to the island’s function as a slave entrepôt.<sup>30</sup>

Third, since hired free labour was not available regularly enough and in sufficient quantities at the crucial peak agricultural periods (planting, ploughing, and especially harvesting); since leasing to tenants was markedly less profitable, at any rate in the short run; and since endogenous debt-bondage was no longer an available option, slaves – unfree, coercible labour – were then absolutely required by the Athenian rich and had to be obtained from outside the Athenian economy.<sup>31</sup> That, then, is a possible model, a simplified set of assumptions as to what could have happened in Athens and Attica at the turn of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE and during the sixth century. Of course, it is no more than a model, but it is also no less, and on present evidence it seems to work tolerably well (Finley [1980] 1998a, modified by Rihll 1996). Many problems, however, remain.

## V

First, there is the question just how, and how far, slaves were employed in the basic productive activity of agriculture, whether rationally employed or otherwise. Most agricultural producers in Attica were ideally self-sufficient, satisficing peasant farmers. Most probably practised intensive agriculture, spreading the risks by growing ‘a little of everything’ to accommodate micro-climates and vagaries of inter-annual rainfall, and maximizing labour input and crop output by, for example, manuring as much as possible and fallowing as little as was compatible with preservation of the land’s fertility.<sup>32</sup> There was no attested competition in Attica between slave-run estates and peasants’ small farms. Rather, slaves and peasants went together symbiotically like a horse and carriage.

One particular question to which we would like an answer is how far such peasants could or did employ slave labour to assist them, as we are assured by Xenophon and others that ‘everyone’ ideally would if they could. The suggestion that at least half the 25–50,000 adult male Athenian citizens owned at least one slave seems plausible to us. A holding of fifty slaves for a rich Athenian seemed plausible to them. The development of the Athenian empire in the second half of the fifth century will surely have meant that ownership of slaves could extend well below ‘rich’ Athenians into the ranks of the hoplites and down into the thetes; at any rate, just as a hoplite would expect to employ a slave as his batman on land, so thetic slaveowners are attested as rowing in the same fleets, possibly the same ships, as their slaves (P. Hunt 1998; with Graham 1998). But so far as agriculture is concerned, beyond saying that, where a property required regular extra-familial labour, especially at peak periods, the labour employed would be slave labour we cannot safely go. We cannot, for example, say whether that slave labour on the land would be more often male (as tends to be assumed, without good evidence) than female.<sup>33</sup>

Outside agriculture, we have already encountered both Xenophon’s skilled craftsmen slaves and Thucydides’ mine-slaves. The implication of the former



passage, that this was a normal means of enrichment for the wealthy, is amply corroborated.<sup>34</sup> To Thucydides' implied global figure for mine slaves we may add the finer-grained evidence of individual huge – and so grossly exceptional – holdings provided by Xenophon: 1000 – Nikias, 600 – Kallias; 300 – Philemonides, and the extant mine-leases and courtroom speeches. Labour in the mines was, almost without exception, replaceable, disposable, infinitely exploitable chattel slave labour, as we might have predicted from the appalling physical conditions of work.<sup>35</sup> At the other end of the social spectrum there were the private slave-bankers, Pasion (before his manumission) and others. That Pasion and Phormion are the only slaves at Athens known to have achieved not just personal freedom but eventually citizenship speaks worlds for, on the one hand, the wall normally dividing economics from politics, and, on the other, the unique nature of banking, both uniquely lucrative and unique in bringing slaves and citizens together on a working footing of something like social equality.<sup>36</sup>

## VI

Finally, let us return to the politics of 'political economy', specifically to Athenian democratic politics. The purchase and use by the city of public slaves (accountants, clerks, policemen) are mostly non-controversial matters – apart perhaps from the Scythian-archer policemen: why were they first introduced? how precisely were they recruited, maintained, trained, kept up to strength? why were they discontinued (Nippel 1995: 13)? The liberation of slaves for service in the fleet, bought from their masters at public expense, is interesting too as a crisis-led contravention of normal practice (P. Hunt 1998; Graham 1998). However, as is implied by Xenophon's remarkable scheme for the public purchase of mining slaves (Xen. *Poroi* 4.13–32; cf. Waterfield and Cartledge 1997), a scheme which was not taken up, slaves were not normally thought of economically as a means of public collective enrichment. This was probably because the city's amateur economic management structures would not have run to it.

In conclusion: the really problematic issues, which have not been broached explicitly in this short paper, seem to me to be these two. How far did the ownership of slaves enable Athenian citizens either to participate in politics at all in the first place or to do so in ways they would not have done otherwise? Second, how far did slave ownership make the democracy – the type of democracy Athens was – possible? Whatever our answers, they should be conditioned, as I hope I have made clear, by the assumption that the Athenians' purchase and use of slaves were in the first instance the outcome of hardheaded prudential calculation – as that was then understood.



## NOTES

- 1 Besides my co-editor Lin Foxhall, who originally persuaded me to produce this complement to the colloquium proceedings (formally, apart from acting as chief organizer and host, my chief role at the colloquium was as respondent to the paper by Dimitris Kyrtatas), I am most grateful to my seminar audience at Stanford who, courtesy of Joe Manning and Walter Scheidel, helpfully commented on an earlier oral version in October 1999.
- 2 Bibliography on ancient slavery: Miller 1993–1998 (with the assistance of Walter Scheidel). Further bibliography in Finley 1968; Herrmann and Brockmeyer 1983; Wiedemann 1997; Finley 1999b.
- 3 Comparison, with special reference to slavery ancient and modern: Cartledge 1985.
- 4 Genovese 1965 and Ransom 1998 are cases in point. For Karl Marx's own brand of historicizing political economy, apart of course from *Das Kapital* (pointedly subtitled 'A Critique of Political Economy'), see Marx 1964; with de Ste. Croix 1981.
- 5 Finley 1974, responding in particular to e.g. Polanyi 1968, Polanyi et al. 1957, (cf. Cartledge 1998: 20 n. 11); cf. de Ste. Croix 1981: 69–90.
- 6 See generally Meikle 1995b (and his two articles cited in Cartledge 1998: 20 n. 13); for a relevant discussion that focuses mainly on Aristotle's early-modern reception see Vivenza 1999.
- 7 Lanza 1991; cf. on Greek 'economic' writings on slavery generally, Klees 1975.
- 8 Garlan 1992 (written 1986). See further his general work on Greek slavery: Garlan 1988; with the briefer but still very useful Fisher 1993. For an attempt to re-create 'slave life in Classical Greece', see now Klees 1999.
- 9 Finley 1999a; cf. Meikle 1995b: esp. chapter 8; Cartledge (1998): esp. 6–7.
- 10 Finley 1981d ('Technical innovation and economic progress in the ancient world', 1965); cf. Cartledge 1998: 22 n. 43.
- 11 Roman slavery: Hopkins 1978; Garnsey and Saller 1987; Yavetz 1988; Bradley 1994.
- 12 Cohen 1992 does his best to discover the Athenian equivalents of Petronius' Trimalchio; he scores many hits against crude primitivism but not, I think, against a carefully argued substantivism.
- 13 Helotage as 'archaic': Austin and Vidal-Naquet 1977. Not that Athens was economically 'typical': Cartledge 1998: 19 n. 7. Other forms of unfree labour: Archer 1988; Bush 1996; Engerman 1996; cf. Engerman 1999.
- 14 Gschnitzer 1963–76; cf. Finley 1981b: 98 ('Was Greek civilisation based on slave labour?', 1959).
- 15 Finley 1998a on 'slave society' as opposed to a society with slaves.
- 16 de Ste. Croix 1981: Index s.v. 'Poor and Rich', esp. 425–6. I use 'exploitation' in the sense defined by de Ste. Croix 1981: esp. chs. II, IV. Whether the ancient Greeks could have thought in anything like those (Marxist) terms is of course a quite different matter: see Kyrtatas, this volume.
- 17 For a cultural rather than economic reading see Goldhill 1998.
- 18 For the bottom line, see Cohen, this volume.
- 19 Osborne 1985: 1–7 is an excellent discussion of the *sunokhia* of Meixidemos that was denounced for public confiscation in 341 BCE.
- 20 Gallant 1991. On the suitability of the term 'peasants' see Cartledge 1993; and Garnsey 1998 (title).
- 21 This is the burden of Finley 1999a, including its title.
- 22 Ath. 6.262–73 (esp. 262b, d) = Wiedemann 1981: no. 80. On Athenian demography compare (and contrast) Hansen 1985 and Sallares 1991.

- 23 Jameson 1977: 136 and n. 72 (pointing out the uncertainty of the text); Hanson 1992.
- 24 Osborne 1995 is an excellent discussion of this as of many other aspects of my present topic; note that his use of comparative data for, for example, purposes of hypothetical quantification is deliberately limited to data from modern Greece.
- 25 Van Wees 1999 is an excellent up-to-date account of the Solonian crisis, although perhaps his modern(izing) 'mafia' analogy is not quite as helpful as he thinks.
- 26 Fisher 1995 pursues the implications of what he takes to be Solon's legislation in respect of *hybris*.
- 27 'Free' labour in comparative perspective: Engerman 1999.
- 28 Fuks 1984 includes a comprehensive collection of ancient sources.
- 29 Cartledge 1983. For the later period: Finley 1977; 1981a: chapter 10.
- 30 The distinction accorded to his fellow-Chians by Theopompos (*FGrHist.* 115 F122), of having pioneered chattel slavery, may be connected with this: see Vidal-Naquet 1986.
- 31 Agricultural labour: Jameson 1992, 1994; cf. 1977. Leasing: overestimated by Wood 1988, since all the evidence suggests that only the (relatively) rich would be in a position to go in for it on a substantial and recurrent basis.
- 32 Besides Jameson 1992, 1994; cf. 1977, see Gallant 1991, Garnsey 1988, 1998: 201–13 ('The Yield of the Land in Ancient Greece', 1992); Cartledge 1993, 1995.
- 33 Jameson 1977; de Ste. Croix 1981: esp. 505–8; *contra*: Wood 1988 (but see n. 41). On women's work see Scheidel 1995; 1996.
- 34 For instance, Lys. 12.19 (the speechwriter's and his brother's own holding of 120 slaves, many or most in shield-manufacture); and Dem. 27.24–5 (with Davies 1971: no. 3597, secc. XIII–XIV; 1981: 63) (Demosthenes, sr. owned 52 or 53 specialist slave cutlers and couch-makers). At a humbler social level we may add, e.g., the slave craftsmen who worked, alongside their masters, on the Erechtheion: Austin and Vidal-Naquet 1977: no. 73.
- 35 Major owners: Xen. *Poroi* 4.14–15 (trs. and comm.: Wiedemann 1981: no. 87; Waterfield and Cartledge 1997); archaeology of slave-mining: Morris 1998a.
- 36 Dividing wall: Finley 1981a: 62–76 ('Land, debt and the man of property in classical Athens'). Slave-bankers: Cohen 1992; Shipton 1997.

# ON PAUL CARTLEDGE, 'THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GREEK SLAVERY'

*Michael H. Jameson*

With his essay's title Paul Cartledge makes clear at the outset that he sees Greek slavery and its economic role in the context of the political and social values of the Greek world, its ideology or 'mentalities'. In the debate between primitivism and modernism (renamed and to some extent redefined to the former's evident advantage, as substantivism and formalism) the question has been where to place classical Greece, in particular classical Athens (the chief subject of what follows), between those societies where actions are determined primarily by communal values and those in which rational calculation of material interest prevails (corresponding roughly to the rather artificial polarity of *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*; Aristotle had no doubt that most people choose *kerdos* over *timê*: *Pol.* 1318b17–18). Increasingly challenges to the more primitivist position associated with Moses Finley have been raised.<sup>1</sup> It may not be so much a matter of shifting our estimate of the character of the ancient economy so many degrees away from Finley as it is of recognizing the simultaneous operation of several different systems in different spheres of life. Formulations, such as those by Paul and Laura Bohannon (1968) for their account of the economy of the Tiv of West Africa may prove useful for other societies as well.<sup>2</sup> Exchange among the Tiv occurred in three main spheres: subsistence, status and marriage, using different means and rules which were not interchangeable. A market, strictly speaking, operated only in the first sphere. The differences between the spheres of land and trade in Athens had been noted by Finley (1985c: 77). Following the changing relationship between spheres over time may be a more useful undertaking than attempting to categorize the development of the society as a whole. Both here and elsewhere Cartledge argues for a multiplicity of economies among the hundreds of Greek communities and within any one (Cartledge 1998; cf. Davies 1998, Cahill in press: chapter 6). As for Athenian slavery, it did not exist in a single sphere but functioned variously in different contexts.

In the private ownership of slaves, two forms are distinguishable: (1) the large numbers of male slaves owned by a very few rich men and used in their own enterprises or leased to others. Mining and large agricultural properties (in aggregate, not usually as single estates) are generally agreed to have depended on the availability of many slaves. In the former few if any freemen are thought to have worked while in agriculture of this scale the employment of citizens for hire (as opposed to freedmen specialists such as vine-dressers, formerly slaves) is demonstrable only for harvesting.<sup>3</sup> It is the advantage the rich gained from the use of larger numbers of slaves in all enterprises that has been the concern of Cartledge's essay in which he argues that insofar as this type of slave-holding enabled the Athenian elite to maintain their status and influence in their society slavery was indeed vital to the political economy.<sup>4</sup> (2) The economic aspects of the second form of slavery, which probably comprised, as we shall see, a majority of all Athenian slaves, have attracted less attention or even been denied significance while it is granted that virtually all Athenians would have wanted to own slaves if they could have afforded to do so. Relief from or assistance in manual labour accorded well with the citizen's image of himself. Small numbers of men and women were attached to individual households, which they often entered as children. These slaves are commonly referred to in our sources as *oiketai*, a word often translated misleadingly as 'domestics' or 'household servants'. But the word is widely used for slaves in contrast to the free and often without any suggestion of a connection with a particular household, a clear indication that a person attached to a household not through kinship was characteristically a slave.<sup>5</sup> The versatility of these household slaves is recognized but the implications are not always pursued. One might well get the impression that their chief function was to attend to the personal needs – food, washing, dress – of their masters, and that in strictly financial terms slave ownership while not profitable was socially very desirable. (Is there lingering influence from a nineteenth-century or colonial model?)

If, however, we think of the household as an economic enterprise as well as a social unit, the slaves' contributions are seen to be more varied and important.<sup>6</sup> Insofar as agriculture was the mainstay of most Athenian, as of most other Greek households, a major activity in the house itself was the processing and storage of products of the land to which the household had access – animal as well as agricultural products and uncultivated resources such as fuel (Ault 1999; Cahill in press). Nor was the movement solely from field to house: products were exchanged, valuable refuse was accumulated and returned to the field. Few would doubt that in households with slaves all the more burdensome tasks were assigned to, or shared disproportionately, by the household's slaves. Nor were female slaves relegated to the role of chamber maids, as scenes in vase paintings might suggest, but were active in production in the house (particularly of textiles) and in the field (Jameson 1977:137–8; Pomeroy 1989, 1994; Scheidel 1995). There were no barriers to slaves being used for hard work in a shop or 'factory' (*ergasterion*), often enough located in or attached to the

house (Nevett 1999: 66–7, 88). Nor is there any reason to suppose that when the household was in the countryside, temporarily or permanently, the slaves, male and female, were not engaged in all the work required of the household.

It is on the question of the contribution of these many small numbers of slaves to small-scale agriculture that there has been the greatest disagreement. The common view until recently has been that such agriculture was primarily cereal culture for subsistence, requiring low labour input and uneconomical for the use of hands other than those of the proprietor's family except at critical periods such as harvesting. I have argued for a more complex and exacting programme, and may perhaps be pardoned for returning to what continues to be a contentious issue.<sup>7</sup> There have been a number of other studies from various points of view revising what has been the standard view of stagnation and rigidity in classical Greek agriculture, though not necessarily agreeing with the labour intensive interpretation I have offered.<sup>8</sup> For Sallares (1991:56–7), however, it is simply a 'matter of the most elementary economics': the limiting factor is land not labour; maximizing production comes from maximizing yield per unit area, as by planting trees (instead of cultivating cereals). The distinctions may not be so clear cut in a land-hungry society (witness the numerous Athenian cleruchies) where investment in trees and vines, which I would not deny the small farmer, not only requires more labour for their tendance but also preparation of suitable land. Aristotle (*Pol.* 1318b), without reference to the nature of the crops, assumes that in a democracy of farmers most citizens are too busy, explicitly because of the small size of their properties, to interfere with government.

To what was presented earlier more recent studies have added an appreciation of the concern for soil improvement through manuring and composting (Ault 1994; 1999), confirmation of terrace-building and maintenance and of water conservation as shown, especially by research on Delos (Lohmann 1992; Brunet and Poupet 1997). The rich no doubt occupied the best land and the more modest landowners and the poor would then have had to work mostly the poorer land that required terracing and trenching for maintenance. The intermingling of animal husbandry and agriculture has been discussed by Hodkinson (1988). A mixed regime, with vines, trees and animals, is indicated even for small landowners. There are no grounds for supposing a marked difference in the regimes of larger and smaller proprietors,<sup>9</sup> though no doubt the former could afford to risk more of their land and labour on cash crops.<sup>10</sup> For fourth-century Attica earlier scholars were not entirely mistaken in their estimate of the importance of labour-intensive viticulture and arboriculture with their attendant processing, storage and distribution.<sup>11</sup> A degree of self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) and the securing in the first instance of adequate subsistence for the household while minimizing risks were no doubt the primary goals of all but the rich. Under these circumstances there was more than enough work to be done in the Attic countryside (which is not to say that no one could farm that countryside without a slave), and the Athenian citizen surely did not allow his

slave to be idle or engaged in household chores when there was backbreaking work to be done in the fields.<sup>12</sup> Neither the citizen nor the slave were, of course, restricted to agricultural work, an activity that might escape some of the disdain felt for other manual labour. The smaller the property the more we might expect the proprietor to look to other sources of income. If a slave could be afforded, any such work was furthered by his or her participation. The existence of slave shopkeepers and slaves 'dwelling apart' can be seen as an outgrowth of this sharing in the diversification of employment by the masters. There was always the possibility of hiring the slave out when not needed for work on the master's farm, house or business. All slaves were a potential source of income. Such opportunities are the greater if we believe that in certain spheres Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries was more diversified and entrepreneurial than has been allowed.

It has often been suggested that Solon's preservation (or securing) of the poorer Athenians' freedom forced the larger landowners to look elsewhere for labour and that the Persian Wars and their aftermath with the capture of a great many of the enemy (mostly not Greek and not easily ransomed) speeded the process of securing a servile lowest class. In the case of the mines, Peisistratid experience in Thrace may have introduced both the type of exploitation and the manpower for it. Once the value of such large gangs to their rich owners became clear, other large enterprises would have been sought. Athenian public works with much heavy manual labour were an obvious objective. The other pattern of a few slaves within the household seems well established for the elite in the Homeric poems and came to be more widely diffused in archaic society.

If it is granted that there was work to be done and that slaves were useful, the issue becomes one of demography and class structure at Athens – who had access to the land and the slaves. Wood (1988) assumed a countryside largely in the hands of 'peasants' by which she meant small-holders who owned no slaves. Foxhall (1992 and this volume) and Osborne (1992, 1995), on the contrary, have seen Attic land as largely in the hands of the rich. Morris (1994a) and Hanson (1995: 478–9), however, have argued that, even if Foxhall and Osborne's calculations are accepted, in comparative terms Athens remains remarkably egalitarian. Hanson sees a countryside largely held by families whose men served as hoplites; indeed, no one suggests that most of these were supported by non-agricultural activities. Since few Athenians apparently owned no land,<sup>13</sup> if, aside from the limited holdings of the rich and public bodies, the bulk of the land was owned by the hoplites, then most properties were, of necessity, relatively small, and for the land-holdings to have been more than tokens of respectable citizenship they would have to have been worked intensively. A middling position, between seeing agriculture (and with it slavery) as predominantly the sphere of the rich and that of supposing both the land and the society belonged essentially to small proprietors of thetic status ('peasants'), seems most reasonable. Where the line was drawn below the concept of 'the ordinary Athenian' affects our evaluation of the evidence of

comedy which attributes small-scale slave-owning to its average man, including, for dramatic purposes at least, the poor man.<sup>14</sup> A corollary to believing that most of the poorest citizens had very little land is to allow them more engagement in enterprises not directly involved in production from the land, those spheres that are emerging as more complex and developed.

How many slaves there were in classical Athens has been an intractable problem. It is an issue that is more significant for our second type of slave-holding. A greater or lesser number of slave gangs owned by the rich and employed on their estates or in the mines or quarries would have had little effect on the structure of Athenian society. But if the slaves distributed among those below the rich were numerous (whatever the lower limit of ownership), the economic, social and political impact is considerable. Some recent estimates have suggested that (a) the Athenians thought there were about as many slaves as there were Athenians (men, women and children), i.e. more than 150,000 'at certain times' (Hansen 1986: 93); (b) these were roughly as many as the adult male citizens, i.e. 20–30,000 (Hanson 1992); (c) a maximum of 30–50,000 (Scheidel 1995).<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of the Peloponnesian War in 431 there were, according to Thucydides (2.13.6) some 30,000 men (citizens and resident foreigners, both active and in reserve) who could afford to supply their own armour and a slave to attend them in war.<sup>16</sup> To be sure, not all the reserve troops may have had a slave available if called up, but then not all those with a single slave had no others in their household. 30,000 free adult hoplites imply as a minimum an approximately equal number of male slaves, young and fit enough to go on campaign, of our second category, those attached in small numbers to private households. To these slaves are to be added the young, the old and unfit (cf. [Arist.] *Oec.* 1.6.8), and women. The figure of 50,000 is more likely to be a minimum than a maximum.<sup>17</sup> That some *thetes* owned slaves is indicated by Graham's demonstration (1998) that some masters and slaves rowed on the same triremes (as Cartledge has noted).

The social value of owning slaves, made clear by Osborne (1995) and Cartledge, was permanent and had theoretically no lower limit; indeed, slaves themselves owned slaves. The practical, 'economic' value had to be weighed against the other and, no doubt, varied with the composition and circumstances of the household. Any one household fluctuated in size over time, in both its free and its servile members, the latter more easily detachable as the situation required.<sup>18</sup> That the poorest owned no slaves is not in question. Aristotle's statement that the ox was the poor man's slave is obviously consistent with the relative cost of oxen and slaves on the inscription recording the sale of the properties of the Hermokopidai in 415, where the ox team is sold for between one half and two thirds of the mean price for a slave (Meiggs and Lewis 1988: no. 79 [IG I<sup>3</sup> 426], lines 68–9, and p. 247). A free man who could barely feed his family would not have had a slave in his household regularly. But the larger the total number of slaves of the second type the more necessary it is to see them involved in all the economic activities that engaged the majority of free Athenians.



One respect in which we might expect the two types of slave-owning to have been distinguished is in the regime of rewards and punishments which studies of slavery elsewhere have shown to differ radically with the nature of the slave's employment.<sup>19</sup> Effort-intensive work, such as mining, quarrying and building, make heavy use of pain and other penalties. The ultimate reward, that of manumission, is notably lacking for ancient mining slaves. Care- and capital-intensive work, on the other hand, require the prospect of rewards to produce good results and avoid damage to goods and equipment. In agriculture a correlation has been observed between the length of a plant's life and the degree to which rewards or penalties are used. Gangs driven by the lash are inappropriate for the continuous care needed by trees and vines, longer-lived than field crops, and for the equipment for processing the fruit and storing the product. The large numbers of slaves on the lands of the rich are not equivalent to the gangs in the mines. The bailiff is conspicuously rewarded in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* (12.6–7) but lesser rewards are offered throughout the household (13.6–9; Pomeroy 1989; 1994); neither Xenophon nor Pseudo-Aristotle (*Oec.* 1.5.3–6) mentions physical punishment such as whipping, a routine measure not limited to the mines (but costly if used injudiciously, Theophr. *Char.* 12.12 – a whipped slave kills himself). Cereal culture of annual crops requiring less equipment and attention might be expected to foster a more brutal approach by masters and overseers. But they may have been constrained by the care needed for the maintenance of productivity of small properties, by the fact that most farming was mixed and most slaves in the fields also worked in the house. No doubt the prospect of eventual freedom profoundly affected the relations between slaves and masters in the more intimate and less impersonal context of working together in house and field. Those with responsibilities most like those of the free (bailiffs, housekeepers) are to be treated with consideration, while workmen are to be rewarded with food ([Arist.] *Oec.* 1.5.2). The appropriate treatment would have been most debatable where many hands worked a large amount of land. Xenophon's discussion is a contribution to the inherently ambiguous situation of a large household which is also a large enterprise.

Finally, to address the questions with which Cartledge ends his essay, 'how far did the ownership of slaves enable Athenian citizens either to participate in politics at all in the first place or to do so in ways they would not have done otherwise? Second, how far did slave-ownership make . . . democracy possible?' To the degree that Athenian democracy was marked by the freedom and participation of the poorest free citizens, these may not have depended on slave-ownership but were surely facilitated by it. If two neighbours consider applying for membership in the Council of 500 for a year, the one with more working hands in his household is more likely to apply and to serve. If the rich are more frequently represented in the Council,<sup>20</sup> then lower down the scale, everything else being equal, the more prosperous modest citizen and the slave-owner will have been more commonly present than the less prosperous and slave-less who



had no time to spare. The 'idle mob' of ancient Athens is indeed a myth and entirely at odds with the models of slavery we have been tracing.

## NOTES

- 1 E.g., Cohen 1992, on banking and trade; Burke 1992; Osborne 1991b, on pursuit of cash from agriculture by the rich, and Osborne 1996 on the carefully worked out organization of early archaic trade, and *a fortiori* of later trading.
- 2 A summary in Layton 1997: 102–4. See von Reden 1995 for a similar approach in a study of the cultural context of exchange in Greece.
- 3 Tenancy of rich men's land by the poor is hypothesized by Wood 1988. We may not hear of it in the orators because they are mostly concerned with the wealthy (though it would affect their income) but comedy is also silent on the subject.
- 4 In this he is in agreement with Osborne 1991b and 1995.
- 5 E.g. [Arist.] *Mag. Mor.* 1.33.14 and 17; without reference to *oikoi*, e.g., Thuc. 8.40.2.
- 6 Pomeroy 1994 sees Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* as a treatise on managing such an enterprise, on a large scale.
- 7 Jameson 1977 (influenced by the controversial thesis of Ester Boserup), 1992, 1994.
- 8 For the many tasks on a small property farmed intensively and diversely, see Hanson 1995: 70. For other such contributions, see the various publications of Paul Halstead, e.g. 1987, Peter Garnsey, e.g. 1998c, Robin Osborne 1987, and Lin Foxhall 1992, 1997a. Isager and Skysgaard 1992 and Scheidel 1995 present more conservative views.
- 9 Cf. Rosivach 1993: 552 on the similarity of crops grown by slave-owners and non-slave-owners in the northern American colonies.
- 10 But [Aristotle] *Oec.* 1.6.1 recommends that small properties should make use of the Attic system, i.e., that all the produce should be sold and supplies for the household purchased as needed, to avoid problems of storage.
- 11 Cf. Jameson 1987; on processing of oil and wine, see Amouretti 1986; Ault 1999.
- 12 One may well wonder whether this subject has suffered from the same reluctance to admit the active role of slaves that has beset the study of warfare, seen as the exclusive domain of the citizen (cf. P. Hunt 1998). But in this case, ancient authors show no reluctance to offer examples. As Garland (1988: 64) has pointed out, the normal expectation of an enslaved prisoner of war was to work on the land (*Eur. Rhes.* 74–5, 176).
- 13 5000 in 403, Dionysios in Hypothesis to Lysias 34, but too low according to Gomme 1933: 27.
- 14 The comic evidence is discussed in Jameson 1977 and 1992 but rejected by Wood 1988: 51–80, 173–80 and Scheidel 1995: 210. The picture suggested by comedy is consistent with that from other literary sources. See P. Hunt 1998: 144–5, n. 3, on rival Athenian claims on the hoplites, as belonging with the rich or with the *thetes*.
- 15 The same figure but including free aliens, compared to 100–120,000 Athenians, Sallares 1991: 60. (a) and (c) refer to the fourth century, (b) to the later fifth century.
- 16 Cf. Gomme 1933: 5, 1956: 34–9. On the attendants, P. Hunt 1998: 167.
- 17 30,000 (for war) + 10,000 for mines + females and others. Thucydides' 'more than two myriads' of slaves who deserted in the Dekeleian War (7.27.5) is taken by Cartledge to refer mostly to mining slaves. Hanson's discussion (1992, cf. 1995: 130) should make us hesitate to make that assumption. But since surely

not all slaves were thought to have been lost in the war, the general idea that the runaways were two thirds of 30,000, corresponding to a citizen population of 30,000 (frequently mentioned), seems more likely than 20,000 for slaves and 20,000 for citizens. See also P. Hunt 1998: 111–15.

- 18 Cf. Gallant 1991. On the numbers of slaves and their engagement in agriculture Fisher (1993: 37–46), in a clear and succinct treatment of the subject, opts for ‘a less extreme version of the “maximalist view”’, with ‘the important qualification, that the extent of slave-owning probably varied considerably over time’. Sallares (1991: 57) warns against looking for ‘masses of slave labour on the land’ but except perhaps on the estates of the rich no one imagines ‘masses’. Sallares’ own guess at slave numbers (n.15, above) is not significantly lower than our own estimate.
- 19 Fenoaltea 1984; Hunter 1994: 162–70 for Athens. Comedy suggests corporal punishment in the household was routine but is no help in distinguishing regimes of rewards and punishments, but note a citizen woman’s nightmare of her son in fetters and working with the hoe, *Men. Dys.* 414–17. *Arist. Pol.* 1330a advocates manumission as an incentive for all slaves.
- 20 Rhodes 1972: 5–6; Hansen 1986: 59–60 who has also argued (57–8) that service on the Council was voluntary, Sallares 1991: 52 that it was compulsory.

# THE HIRELING AND THE SLAVE

## A transatlantic perspective

*Walter Scheidel*

Aristotle and his contemporaries were not alone in likening free hired labour to the work of slaves.<sup>1</sup> More than thirty years ago, Moses Finley advocated a comparative approach:

The pejorative judgments of ancient writers about labour, and specifically about the labour of the artisan, and of anyone who works for another, are too continuous, numerous, and unanimous, too wrapped up in discussions of every aspect of ancient life, to be dismissed as empty rhetoric. In other slave-owning societies for which there is fuller documentation, these implications and their practical effects are unmistakable. . . . comparisons must be made with caution and reserve. But this particular one seems to me to be valid and necessary.

(Finley 1981d [1965]: 194)

In the most ambitious comparative study of slavery to date, Orlando Patterson confidently takes the pervasive impact of this phenomenon as a given, not only among the literary elite but also among the labourers themselves:

The use of personally dominated individuals for the production and reproduction of wealth exposed the reality behind the so-called free labor. The laborer came to see his work for others for what it really was – alienation from the means of production and exploitation by the employer. Faced with the stark reality of personal power exercised over slaves, the worker could easily see that his much-vaunted freedom to change employers was simply a meaningless freedom to change masters. . . . Nonslave workers universally tended to despise work for others in all societies where a critical mass of slaves was used.

(O. Patterson 1982: 33–4).

Patterson paints with a broad brush. But as his own careful definition of slavery shows, wage-labourers differed from slaves in very important respects. It also remains an open question whether the disdain others or even the labourers themselves felt for their work would actually discourage them from performing it. In the following, I take a closer look at this problem in the best documented slave society of all, the United States. In much the same way as in ancient historians' analyses of their sources, I shall focus on the views of the elite in order to facilitate direct comparison with the ancient texts. Finley was right to call for caution in the use of comparative material. There is no doubt that ancient and modern chattel slavery existed in different social, economic, political and religious contexts. With respect to assessments of hired labour, one must bear in mind that, unlike Aristotle, nineteenth-century American writers and politicians engaged in a politically sensitive discourse that was firmly embedded in the controversy between proslavery and abolitionism, which encouraged Southerners to couch their views in more tactically appropriate language than a Greek elite writer would care to do. Moreover, slaveowning plantocrats were well-advised to heed the feelings of the non-slaveholding majority of their people. My principal goal is to demonstrate that, in spite of all these differences in formal presentation, the more fundamental differences between the 'ancient economy' of the substantivist school and the capitalist export-economy of the Old South, and the pervasive impact of racism in America, two slave societies that were separated from each other by several millennia could and did in fact produce similar views and sentiments. This finding may be taken to suggest that it was in the first instance the shared experience of chattel slavery, and not the peculiarities of the 'ancient economy', which engendered an irremediably prejudiced view of free hired labour.

Contemporary observers and modern scholars alike frequently observe that in American slave society, menial labour for others put free labourers on the same footing with (black) slaves. The unquestioned equation of slave and black turns references to labourers resembling 'Negroes' into further examples of the likening of free labourers to slaves. As late as 1860, S. D. Moore asserted in a Southern planters' journal that menial labour was an intrinsically contemptible form of employment that confirmed the essential slavery of the individuals who performed it, regardless of their true legal status.<sup>2</sup> This has been taken as an example of 'the Southern pro-slavery tendency to focus its scorn on low-grade service employments. [The] subordination of workers, free or unfree, who performed low-grade service work was adjudged uniquely servile and contemptible' (Glickstein 1991: 151).

This attitude evolved gradually and should to some extent be seen as a corollary of the much-vaunted freedom of the post-revolutionary (white) citizen. For much of the eighteenth century,

[t]he many gradations of unfreedom among whites made it difficult to draw fast lines between any idealized free white worker and a pitied

or scorned servile Black worker. Indentured servitude, impressment, apprenticeship, convict labor, farm tenancy, wage labor and combinations of wage labor and free farming made for a continuum of oppressions among whites.<sup>3</sup>

(Roediger 1991: 25)

Thus, prior to the Revolution, explicit condemnations of menial work for others appear to be rare. One case is referred to by the Earl of Egmont who recounts the views of a Carolina merchant in 1740:

He said that where there are Negroes, a white Man despises to work, saying, *what, will you have me a Slave and work like a Negroe?* Nevertheless, if such white Man had Negroes of his own, he would work in the field with them.<sup>4</sup>

(Quoted by Jordan 1977: 129–30)

The spread of this attitude is reflected in concurrent terminological change. Before the Revolution, a wide varieties of whites (not just indentures) and slaves were called 'servants'.<sup>5</sup> Only with independence did this indiscriminate usage begin to become intolerable to employed whites. The extent to which black slaves and dependent whites could be conflated becomes apparent in a bitter observation made by Benjamin Franklin, himself a former apprentice, in 1770:

A slave . . . is a human creature stolen, taken by Force, or bought of another *or of himself* with Money. . . . He may be sold again or let for Hire, by his Master. [He] must wear such Cloaths as his Master thinks fit . . . and be content with such Food . . . as his Master thinks to order for him: [He] must never absent himself from his Master's Service without Leave [and is] subject to severe Punishments for small Offenses.

(Quoted by Roediger 1991: 29)<sup>6</sup>

This description covers not just black slavery but also indenture and even apprenticeship.

After the 1770s, the slave became an antithesis of the free male republican citizen (Roediger 1991: 34–6). It was no longer considered acceptable to refer to a hired labourer as a 'servant'. Instead, both employers and employees shifted from the term 'servant' to more euphemistic expressions such as 'hired (wo)man' and 'help' (Roediger 1991: 47–9; Steinfeld 1991: 126–8). The term 'hireling' took on a negative meaning, associated as it was with the British mercenaries of the War of Independence and the War of 1812, yet included civilian wage labour as well. The 'hireling' thus came to be linked to the slave.

Hirelings and slaves were sometimes connected in popular logic, as in the observation that those who labor for others become 'mere Negroes [growing] lazy, and careless' and in the frequent references to sailors, the outstanding occupational group of waged adult males, as children and slaves.<sup>7</sup>

(Roediger 1991: 45)

It is hardly a coincidence that this stark contrast between free citizen and slave is also found in colonial South Africa. Thus, the Boers came to convince themselves that the work of artisans and that of slaves were the same thing (Hancock 1958: 332). 'The belief became entrenched that the proper role of the white inhabitants was to be a land- and slave-owning elite, and that manual or even skilled labour in the service of someone else did not befit anyone with the status of freeman' (du Toit and Giliomee 1983: 7).<sup>8</sup>

But if the artisan was sometimes looked down on, it was above all the poor unskilled labourer whose circumstances forced him into drudge work who was likened to the slave. Not only was the verb *slave* used to indicate the performance of work in ways unbecoming to whites, but new and negative phrases such as *white nigger* (that is, 'drudge') and *work like a nigger* (that is, 'to do hard drudging work') came into American English in the 1830s. Richard Henry Dana's searing indictment of the oppression of antebellum sailors in *Two Years before the Mast* took care to quote an irate captain screaming at his crew: 'You've got a driver over you! Yes, a *slave-driver*, — a *nigger-driver*! I'll see who'll tell me he isn't a *nigger slave*!' (Roediger 1991: 68).

This unfavourable assessment of free labour was extended by pro-slavery Southerners to slaveless society in ascribing a slave-like condition to the free white working poor in the North. In 1856, the Southern poet William Grayson penned a book-length poem, entitled *The Hireling and the Slave*. In it he drew the conclusion that miserable white Northerners would 'freely . . . give' themselves to slavery in order to become 'secure to live' (Roediger 1991: 84–5). This sentiment is reminiscent of a line from Hellenistic Comedy, alternatively ascribed to Philippos and Menander: 'How much better is it to get a proper master than to live a base and miserable life as a free man.'<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, such Southerners reserved the lion's share of their scorn for their own compatriots. Samuel Cartwright, an outspoken and politically conscious Southern physician according to Genovese, referred scornfully to those whites 'who make negroes of themselves' in the cotton and sugar fields (Genovese 1965: 47). Critics of slavery were familiar with this attitude, and considered it an impediment to the abolition to slavery. Frederick Law Olmsted stressed the expediency, in order to help end slavery, of 'demonstrating that the condition of the laborer is *not* necessarily a servile one; that the occupation of the laborer does *not* necessarily prevent a high intellectual and moral development, does not necessarily separate a man from great material comfort'.<sup>10</sup>

Educated members of the Southern elite did not remain unaware of their likeminded Greek precursors.<sup>11</sup> 'The classical writings' stigmatization of manual labor found particular appeal among antebellum Southerners who were also seeking vindication of a slave-based, hierarchical society reflecting natural differences in talents among men' (Glickstein 1991: 35). In 1855, George Frederick Holmes, in a pro-slavery essay, argued that modern civilization in general, and not just ancient Greece and Rome, despised physical labour:

There is very little difference between ancient and modern feelings in this respect . . . Both display the same contempt of labor, and the same repugnance to work; and both seek, as far as possible, to escape from the dire necessity. The esteem, or disesteem, has been nearly equal in both periods; but it was honest and avowed in antiquity, and is pretended or disguised at present.

(Quoted by Glickstein 1991: 35–6)<sup>12</sup>

We also encounter the argument that it is slavery that facilitates civilization and the refinement of others. As James Henry Hammond put it in general terms in what has become known as his 'mudsill speech' before Congress:

In all social systems there must be a class to do the mean duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, fidelity. Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, refinement, and civilization.<sup>13</sup>

(Quoted by Glickstein 1991: 148)

Like the Greeks, some Southerners would emphasize the benefits of *leisure* created by slavery, as a precondition of cultural development. In 1831, Timothy Walker pointed out in true *kaloskagathos* spirit that

as we have a higher and nobler nature [than animals], which must also be cared for, the necessary labor spent upon our bodies should be as much abridged as possible, in order to give us leisure for the concerns of this better nature.

(Quoted by Glickstein 1991: 36–7)<sup>14</sup>

He also insisted that intellectual exercise and fulfilment constituted the essence of an activity's virtue and dignity and that manual labour necessarily precluded such exercise and fulfilment. That the intellectual accomplishments of leisured Southern slaveowners compared poorly with those of their Greek predecessors did not escape the notice of some observers but did not detract from the popularity of this argument.<sup>15</sup> The dissemination of this line of reasoning is again reflected in the concerns of the critics of slavery, e.g., when Olmsted refers



to the notion that menial labour prevented 'a high intellectual and moral development' (quoted above). Henry Clay reputedly defended the necessity of slavery thus: 'If gentlemen will not allow us to have black slaves, they must let us have white ones; for we cannot cut our firewood, and black our shoes, and have our wives and daughters work in the kitchen'.<sup>16</sup> Aristotle (*Pol.* 1323a5–6) maintained that those Greeks who were too poor to afford slaves were compelled to use their wives and children as servants.

The sentiments presented in the last few paragraphs of course point to disdain for (manual) labour in general beyond its perceived proximity to slavery. Glickstein provides a valuable reminder that hostility to labour cannot be simplistically reduced to a single cause, such as slavery.

In antebellum America generally, middle-class attitudes encompassed some definite disdain for manual labor employments for reasons that had little or nothing to do with the institution of Southern slavery. Whether, however, that institution gave some additional or special impetus to a contempt, not merely for menial service employments, but for manual labor generally, would certainly seem plausible. . . . Yet the real significance or magnitude of slavery as a discrete source for such contempt remains a question without a single or unequivocal answer.<sup>17</sup>

(Glickstein 1991: 152)

Much the same could be said with respect to ancient Greek attitudes (cf. von Reden 1992: 26).

As I pointed out above, Southern slaveowners would often find it expedient to voice their prejudice in a more circumspect manner than Greek aristocrats and thinkers talking to their own circle only. Given that the majority of the population of the slave-owning states did not own any slaves and that many of them farmed their land on their own, their leaders had to pay attention to their sensitivities (Glickstein 1991: 153–4). Hence, in sweeping qualifications they repeatedly, though not always, conferred greater respectability on skilled labour and work on the family farm. Somewhat paradoxically, and again perhaps not unlike in Greece, even though most Southern slaves worked in the fields, elitist disdain focussed on service instead of on farming. Thus, Senator Albert Gallatin Brown of Mississippi claimed in 1854 that 'the mechanic arts' were considered honourable.

But there are certain menial employments which belong exclusively to the negro . . . It would take you longer to find a white man, in my State, who would hire himself out as a bootblack, or a white woman who would go out to service as a chambermaid, than it took Captain Cook to sail around the world.

(Quoted by Glickstein 1991: 152–3)<sup>18</sup>

A generation earlier, James Flint, a British visitor to North America in the late 1810s, noted that among the poor in Northern states bordering slaveholding states, 'certain kinds of labour are despised as being the work of slaves', and referred to the residents of an Ohio poorhouse who 'refused to carry water for their own use' for fear of being considered 'like slaves' (Flint 1822: 218). Even poor Irish immigrants, who regularly engaged in slave-like activities (see below), could be said to have adopted this attitude:

The Irishman is seldom long in America before he, too, begins to assert the supremacy of his white blood, and to come out of what he considers the degrading ranks of 'service' . . . The Irish women fall willingly at first into domestic service, but the public opinion around them soon indoctrinates them with the aristocratic idea that black men and women are the only proper servants.

(Mackay 1859: 46–7)

With exquisite disregard for the desperate socio-economic conditions many hired workers found themselves in, Peter Walker asked in 1849, 'Is it not beneficial that there is so universal a feeling of contempt for some employments, to deter men from making so unworthy a choice?'<sup>19</sup> Aristotle might have agreed.

The question remains of whether this was actually true. The above comments imply that even the poor shared elitist sentiments. Yet even so, many would be compelled to act against their preferences since they simply could not afford to display the disdain aristocratic and bourgeois sources take for granted. Speakers either disregarded or were ignorant of the fact that throughout the South, whites would engage in tasks that were typical of slaves. The best example are the Irishmen who were used even for tasks for which slaves were considered unsuitable because of the risk this kind of work entailed.<sup>20</sup> The same kind of employment is attested for the Roman world.<sup>21</sup> Glickstein suggests that the exigencies of reality aside, labourers did not universally share the disdain for work for others, but comes to the conclusion that the possibility cannot be ruled out that even some skilled labourers did (Glickstein 1991: 295–307).

Senator Brown, comparing conditions in the South and in the North, also ignores slave-like labour by Southern whites. Unlike others, however, he does not condemn menial labour out of hand but focuses on its impact on social status (see n. 17):

I do not say that it is disreputable for white men and white women to go out to service and to perform even these lower grades of labor. But I say that with you, as with us, they lose their position in the social scale when they do. With you it must be done by whites, and therefore the whites lose position; with us this menial labor is performed by negroes, and *the equality among the whites is preserved.*

(Quoted by Glickstein 1991: 153, my italics)

This brings together various strands of thought: a concern for the equality among free citizens which could be shared by Greeks and Southerners alike; the implicit likening of free wage-labourers to slaves; the elitist view that the performing of menial labour inevitably degraded free labourers in the eyes of others, and thereby harmed them; and the tempering of prejudice by an elected politician who would not go so far as to consider lowly chores 'disreputable' in and of themselves. This last aspect is absent from the writings of Aristotle.

How do these observations tie in with the main theme of Kyratas' chapter, this volume? It seems that in slave societies in general, and not just in the context of the ancient Greek economy, many found it hard to separate the extraction of labour from the domination of the labourer. The presence of a critical mass of slaves as the natural 'mud-sill' of society helped make work for others, or at any rate certain tasks, seem unacceptable to free citizens. Aristocratic disdain for labour in general and for work for others in particular blended with the anxiety of ordinary citizens that the performing of slave-like labour would somehow detract from their much-vaunted status. In this way, work for others could be construed as a threat to civic equality. The crucial facet of a slave's condition is domination, not exploitation (O. Patterson 1982); thus, when exploitation involved the labourer in activities that were characteristic of slaves, it also put him in proximity to domination, and his freedom seemed to be at stake. It is not just the presence of slaves that triggers this attitude: the formal freedom of the citizen and the absence of intermediate forms of bondage among the non-slave population are also necessary ingredients. The starker the gap between slave and citizen, the stronger this attitude should be. Disdain for 'servile' activities can be seen as one facet of the phenomenon identified, among others, by Finley and Patterson, that the growth of freedom and the growth of slavery went hand in hand.<sup>22</sup> Thus, we might expect classical Athens and nineteenth-century America to be the main exponents of this attitude: both societies were characterized by the presence of large numbers of slaves, rarity of manumission, discrimination against freedmen, and the cult of the free male citizen possessed of political rights equal to those of his peers.<sup>23</sup> Enquiries into attitudes toward free labour in other slave-owning societies that were less extreme in these respects, such as Brazil, are well beyond the scope of this paper. If my prediction is correct, however, their members should have been less inclined to view free labour for others as intrinsically slavish.

## NOTES

- 1 For Aristotle's views, see Kyratas in this volume. The idea that 'labour' is a saleable commodity separable from the person of the labourer is of relatively recent origin: Lasker 1950: 114. Steinfeld 1991 focuses on the 'invention of free labour' in England and America. For classical Greece, see, e.g., Mossé 1976: 99–100; Garlan 1980 and 1988: 93. On ancient concepts of labour (or the lack thereof), see, e.g., Lana 1990; von Reden 1992.
- 2 *De Bow's Review* 28, May 1860, 531–2, referred to by Glickstein 1991: 151.
- 3 See also Steinfeld 1991: 101–4, esp. 102: '[L]egal freedom (and unfreedom) were

- not absolute matters but matters of degree. Strictly speaking, before the eighteenth century, there was no unambiguously free labor in modern terms. In fact, we may rightly say that in modern terms, free labor was, at that time, a contradiction in terms. Whatever one's prior condition, when one undertook to labor for another, one restricted one's freedom to the extent of that undertaking'.
- 4 There is hardly any evidence of free farmers working alongside slaves from antiquity: see Men. *Georgos* p. 157, 46–56 ed. Koerte; it is perhaps implied by Men. *Dys.* 330–1; *VT Sir.* 7.20.
  - 5 See, e.g., Tomlins 1989. Roediger 1991: 30 outlines the similarity of the condition of slaves and indentured servants. On indenture, see, e.g., Galenson 1981; Salinger 1987.
  - 6 'Conversation on slavery', *Public Advertiser* 30 January 1770 (my italics).
  - 7 Ancient slaves were also likened to children: Golden 1985; cf. in general Miller 1985: 588.
  - 8 Also quoted by Watson 1990: 11. According to some observers, this attitude was also found among freeholding farmers: 'Having imported slaves, every common or ordinary European becomes a gentleman and prefers to be served rather than to serve . . . The majority of farmers in the Cape are not farmers in the real sense of the word . . . and many of them consider it a shame to work with their hands' (quoted by du Toit and Giliomee 1983: 7; dated to 1743). An intriguing discussion of the supposed (negative) effects of chattel slavery on the industriousness of free farmers can be found in a letter by W. S. van Ryneveld (29 November 1797), quoted by du Toit and Giliomee 1983: 46–9.
  - 9 Philippos fr. 3 Edmonds (after Stob. *Flor.* 62.35 ed. Hense IV p. 428) also known as Men. fr. 1093 Koerte (CAF III p. 265, after Stob. *Flor.* 62.7 ed. Hense IV p. 423).
  - 10 *New York Daily Times* 13 February 1854, quoted by Glickstein 1991: 92.
  - 11 See in general Glickstein 1991: chapter 6 (135–86), on 'Elitist responses to drudge work', where he refers (135) to the modern debate on 'Greek disdain' for physical work, especially for others, with reference to M.I. Finley.
  - 12 'Ancient slavery', *De Bow's Review* 19 (1855), 576–7.
  - 13 *Congressional Globe*, 35th Congress, 1st Session, 4 March 1858, 962. Hammond's views are discussed in Glickstein: 148–51. See also his 'Letter to an English abolitionist', 28 January 1845, reprinted in Faust 1981: 170–205.
  - 14 'Defence of mechanical philosophy', *North American Review* 33, July 1831.
  - 15 Southern men of letters, who were themselves in many cases neither large planters nor particularly wealthy, frequently defended slavery for the degree of 'learned leisure' (a term coined by Nathaniel Beverley Tucker) it permitted a slaveholding elite. Yet they were well aware 'of how far short Southern culture fell of classical Greece; they were deeply troubled by the extent to which the South's intellectual deficiencies signalled an indifference to the life of the mind, to mental activity engaged in *for its own sake*, as distinct from its more superficial application in the pursuit of wealth' (Glickstein 1991: 420 n.113). See in general Faust 1977.
  - 16 *Herald of Freedom* 1 March 1844, quoted by Glickstein 1991: 152 (emphasis omitted).
  - 17 The relatively frequent availability of virgin land in North America would render service employments even less attractive; cf. Engerman 1986: 279: 'People would pay a price to avoid long-term work for others, preferring to be self-employed, as well as to avoid specific types of work. Thus not only was it difficult to attract white labour for plantation (and, also, in some cases non-plantation) work, but those who did come would seldom be willing to remain and work for others after the expiration of their contracts, preferring to obtain their own land whenever possible.'

- 18 *Congressional Globe*, Appendix, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, 24 February 1854, 230. Cf. Roediger 1991: 33 on the status of 'mechanics', and compare Neesen 1989 on the status of artisans in ancient society.
- 19 'The dignity of labor', *Nineteenth Century: A Quarterly Miscellany* 3 (1849), 289, quoted by Glickstein 1991: 295.
- 20 See F.L. Olmsted in de Ste. Croix 1981: 142, 563 n.12, and in Oakes 1982: 174; see also Yeo 1951: 465–6; Faust 1982: 130; but cf. Stamp 1956: 80. On Irish labour in general, see Glickstein 1991: 414–15 n.77 with references. Contrast the quotation in the text above.
- 21 Varro *Rust.* 1.17.2, with Scheidel 1994: 187–8. Cf. Varro *Rust.* 1.16.4 (the death of a slave is a loss); Plin. *HN* 14.10, with Kunkel 1957: 215–16 (lethal risk for workers in vineyard).
- 22 Finley 1981b: 115; 1998a: 89–90 (cf. Osborne 1995: 38); O. Patterson 1991: xiii–xiv.
- 23 The South African system was based on the trichotomy of free whites, black slaves, and oppressed and often formally indentured natives, subsumed under the heading Khoikhoi. In this case, free whites were set apart from other free groups, such as natives and free blacks, by racial characteristics. Thus, the presence of 'inferiors' who were technically free was fully compatible with the notion that some types of labour did not befit free men as long as these tasks were performed by slaves or non-whites, as opposed to free whites. In other words, this system is contingent on a firm conceptual separation of the 'truly free' from 'metaxy' groups, a distinction that would not have been possible in archaic Greece or Rome where independent and dependent free men were not distinguishable along ethnic lines. Cf. also the Spanish possessions in the Americas where exploitable natives and imported slaves were available in sufficient numbers to forestall the need for indentured white labour: Slicher van Bath 1986.

## A SIMPLE CASE OF EXPLOITATION?

### The helots of Messenia<sup>1</sup>

*Susan E. Alcock*

If chattel slavery has dominated the study of human exploitation in the ancient Greek economy, the existence of other dependent and subordinate populations has nonetheless always been acknowledged. Yet not much is known of any of these people – the *penestai* of Thessaly, the *klarotai* of Crete and, most notoriously, the helots of Messenia and Laconia. The origins of helotage, its exact juridical status ('between free men and slaves', Poll. 3.83), the precise relationship between helot families and Spartiate masters: these and other fundamental topics remain opaque and probably always will. What does emerge more clearly are the helots' attachment to the land, their obligation to feed their masters, and the reportedly brutal nature of their treatment. If locating sites of oppression in the Greek world were our only goal, then this would seem a simple case of exploitation.

Exploitation is no simple matter, however, nor have all possible angles been explored in this twisted relationship of ruler and ruled, feeder and fed. A tendency to consider the helots from a 'central' perspective, to view them solely as if through Spartiate eyes, has resulted in an emphasis on the manipulation and utilization of these people, or on the effect the system of helotage had – for good or ill – upon the Spartan state and its 'national security'. To date, fewer attempts have been made to understand the *internal* workings of the helots – the nature of their social organization, communication networks, survival strategies, or notions of collective identity – all of which in turn might add to our understanding of connections to their masters. Reasons for this particular 'spin' on helot studies are not hard to find. Most basically, it is a product of our extant textual accounts which are often fragmentary, usually late, always written by observers concerned with Laconian affairs, and never by helots themselves. Scholarly fascination with Sparta and the 'Spartan mirage' (Ollier 1973) has proved a vigorous force eclipsing the helots, a fascination itself part and parcel of a long-standing (if by no means universal) classical tradition of preferring study of the exploiters to that of the exploited.

To expand the ambit of helot studies, new tactics and alternative methodologies are required; here the case will be made for the integration of archaeological data with the more traditional textual evidence. Such documentary sources are necessary but not sufficient for the analyses envisioned: they simply do not reach to the lives of people who are, almost by definition, 'voiceless', or lacking in history (Moore and Scott 1997; Wolf 1982). The obvious – if not simple – solution in this case, as in so many others, is to turn to material culture and to an 'archaeology of exploitation'. This chapter will briefly discuss some current archaeological approaches to examining exploitative relationships, broadly defined, before returning to the helots for a more detailed case study. In particular, it will examine the helots of Messenia, forcibly subjugated by Sparta in the late eighth and seventh century BCE and forcibly liberated only some 300 or more years later. The principal archaeological data to be employed stem from the results of regional survey, notably the University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition and the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project. From this work, patterns of settlement within the landscape can be outlined, providing a framework for the business of Spartan exploitation and the enterprise of Messenian response.

### The archaeology of exploitation

We can begin this review in the Aegean, not too far from Messenia, with *An Island Polity: The Archaeology of Exploitation in Melos* (Renfrew and Wagstaff 1982). In that book, a series of multi-disciplinary studies – archaeological, geological, historical and ethnographic – focused not only on how that Cycladic island's resources (notably agricultural land and obsidian quarries) had been variably tapped over time, but also on how the island's inhabitants themselves formed part of wider systems of control, tribute and exchange from the bronze age through to the early modern period. Such questions reflected no small sea-change from more conventional work in classical archaeology; rarely before had exploitation been an explicit subject for analysis. To an extent, that change stemmed from more wide-ranging theoretical and methodological developments in the field, made manifest – in the case of the Melos project – by its archaeological survey, scientific studies and diachronic emphasis.

*An Island Polity's* curiosity about 'exploitation' and its effects also fits well within more global developments in the discipline of archaeology. Although exploitation *per se* may not often show up in book titles, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a wave of interest in specifically archaeological approaches to past asymmetries of power and how they are created, maintained, and resisted. Archaeologists, it has been argued, here stand in a unique position, if not one of which they have always fully taken advantage. Unlike historians:

[They] are not constrained by past elites in their walk across the theater of social power. We have access to the sanctuaries of the weak, the



barrios and isolated villages. We, however, rarely enter these sanctuaries, preferring instead to dig in the temples, palaces, and tombs of the powerful. The challenge is to see the abodes of urban commoners, settlements distant from architectural splendors, and regions identified as cultural backwaters as quite possibly the realm of resistance.

(McGuire and Paynter 1991: 13)

A small sample of recent book titles, subtitles and key words, drawn from the Mediterranean area and more globally, reveals this florescence of activity. We read of domination and resistance (Miller *et al.* 1989); the archaeology of empires (Cherry 1992; D'Altroy 1992; Sinopoli 1994); centre and periphery studies (Bilde *et al.* 1994; Champion 1989; Rowlands *et al.* 1987); world systems analyses (Crowell 1997; Kardulias 1999); imperialism's 'discrepant experiences' (Mattingly 1997); the archaeology of colonialism (Dyson 1985; van Dommelen 1998); the archaeology of rank (Wason 1994); and the archaeology of inequality (McGuire and Paynter 1991). An essential element in each has been the investigation and dissection of systems of exploitation, both of resources and of people.

That distinction – between exploitation of resources and of people – is worth bearing in mind, embroiled as the two inevitably are. Material culture studies can make unique contributions to both. More sophisticated studies of resource utilization, for example the archaeology of mines and of quarries, have been advanced (Knapp *et al.* 1998; Peacock and Maxfield 1997; Torrence 1986). In the exploitation of people and of their labour, a great variety of methodological tactics have been employed, including architectural studies (Nevett 1999; Smith 1999), ceramic production and consumption (Costin and Earle 1989; Ferguson 1991), dietary and health indices (Bisel 1988; Hollimon 1992), mortuary analyses (Morris 1987; Trinkaus 1995), textile production (Brumfiel 1991, 1996), artistic representations (Cummins 1998; Mitchell 1994), and trade and exchange networks (Rowlands 1989; Schortman and Urban 1992), to name but a few (for further references, see McGuire and Paynter 1991; van Dommelen 1998). Tracing exploitation, and its impact on communities and individuals, can be achieved in numerous ways through archaeological means.

An additional method, and one pioneered in the Mediterranean world, has been landscape archaeology – that is, investigations revolving principally around the results of regional surface survey. It is not special pleading to argue that archaeological survey has made a particularly effective recent contribution, at least to certain aspects of the study of exploitation. The landscape perspective that survey provides is the best – indeed the only – way to trace settlement distributions and hierarchies and to estimate trends in land use intensity. Such trends are usually measured by the proliferation and dispersal of rural sites, the appearance of agricultural improvements such as terracing or production facilities, and the distribution of 'off-site' material, which may in some cases indicate the practice of manuring, or at very least an increased human presence



in, and utilization of, the countryside (Alcock et al. 1994; Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988; Osborne 1985c). Survey can also testify, if less directly, to the exploitation of non-agricultural resources such as stone quarries or mines; rural responses to the need to house and feed specialist workers (or slaves) have been traced in Mediterranean contexts (Lohmann 1993; Raber 1987).

Moving from the utilization of resources to the exploitation of people is a major interpretive step for regional studies. The range of the vulnerable in Greek society was expansive – slaves, the poor, women, dependent populations such as helots – resulting in a complex and overlapping mosaic of potential exploitative relationships (see Kyrtatas, this volume). Survey evidence by itself is often too coarse to determine the precise targets of exploitation: who owned *versus* who worked a particular piece of land, for example, or whether slaves or wage labourers brought in a harvest. The problem, of course, lies in the equifinality of the archaeological record. Intensification in agriculture or in other productive spheres may be archaeologically quite marked, but just who was involved, and the nature of their relationships, remain ambiguous. From surface remains alone, it is usually unwise to attempt status identifications, to suggest whether a site's residents were free or slave, tenant or property owner. Exceptions can be made: large and 'rich' sites probably housed wealthy, free owners and their menials; from the location and nature of finds on Methana, Foxhall (1990) has argued for the presence of 'dependent tenants'. Even interpretations such as these, however, may be asking too much of the archaeological data.

By no means, however, should this lead to the conclusion that regional evidence is useless in articulating exploitative relationships. The spatial distribution of human activity in a landscape can be extremely telling about asymmetries of power and prosperity in the aggregate, if not necessarily for specific individuals. The imposition of new levels of taxation or tribute, for example, can be witnessed in regional-level responses, in shifts in the overall structure of settlement and in the nature of individual sites. It is true that such studies of exploitation work best within some sort of historical framework – be it imperial or colonial settings, antebellum slave societies or nineteenth-century capitalist communities – where certain parameters of dominance and demand have already been determined. Within the lines established, archaeological analyses can then be turned to bolstering the evidence for those represented poorly, or not at all, in documentary sources.

Of all the recent literature on domination and exploitation, one further characteristic can be mentioned as particularly pertinent to the Messenians. Most treatments reject, out of hand, any approach that simply considers exploitative behaviour from the point of view of those in positions of power: the slave owner, the large landed proprietor, the central authorities, the imperial capital. Instead, there is a strong desire to observe how vibrant cultures of resistance are created among the exploited, despite often negative, even degrading circumstances and manipulation. As much, if not more, attention is now paid to how individuals and communities react in economic, ritual, or

violent fashion, and to how these reactions affect people on both sides of the 'profit and loss' equation. To put it another way, exploitative relations are now conceived as sets of interaction, of negotiation and dialogue, between different groups. In the case of the Messenians – as in so many other cases of subjection and oppression – archaeology offers the only way to heed all sides of the story and to approach, however partially, what Scott terms 'hidden transcripts': 'the privileged site for nonhegemonic, contrapuntal, dissident, subversive discourse' (Scott 1992).

### Troublesome goods: the helots of Messenia

Like asses galled with heavy loads,  
To their masters bringing by doleful necessity  
Half of all the fruit that the tilled land yields  
(Tyrtaeus, quoted in Pausanias 4.14.5)

The relatively few 'facts' we possess about the domination of Messenia can be rapidly summarized. In the course of the later eighth and seventh centuries BCE, the Spartan state expanded its holdings, ultimately to encompass the fertile territory to its west. Despite at least one major rebellion in the second quarter of the fifth century, Messenia would not be liberated until the coming of Epaminondas and his coalition of anti-Spartan forces, following the battle of Leuktra in 371 BCE. For the intervening three hundred or so years, the land was divided into *kleroi*, allotments, for convenient organization of resources and of labour. That labour was provided by converting part of the defeated indigenous population into helots, and assigning them to *kleroi* – perhaps land they had once owned themselves. Messenia also possessed a scattering of chiefly coastal perioikic communities (e.g., at Asine, Aulon, Kardamyle, and Thouria), but the bulk of the region's inhabitants – greatly outnumbering their Spartan masters – were helots (for reviews of the basic historical framework: Bauslaugh 1990; Cartledge 1979, 1987; Figueira 1984; Kiechle 1959; Lazenby and Hope Simpson 1972: 84–6; Lotze 1959; Powell 1988; Roebuck 1941; on *perioikoi*: Shipley 1997).

Helotage is a difficult state to define; the term 'state serf' has sometimes been invoked to emphasize the communal nature of their bondage to the class of Spartiates. The chief role of the Messenian helot – too distant from Sparta proper to serve easily as domestic servants or in other, more personal capacities, as Laconian helots seem to have done – was agricultural production, a supply mechanism that allowed the Spartiates to maintain their highly militaristic, deeply self-absorbed society (de Ste. Croix 1981: 92–3, 149–50; Ducat 1974, 1978, 1990; Whitby 1994). The helots played this role from 'doleful necessity', with a 'mixture of terror, indoctrination and incentive bonuses' (Cartledge 1987: 407) used to keep them in line. Tactics such as arbitrary beatings, stigmatization, humiliation, and murder are all attested in the sources, although the

frequency of their application, especially in the case of helots dwelling in distant Messenia, is unknown.

A fixation on these questions of domination and violence means that few suggestions have been put forward about the nature of the economic relationship binding the two parties. Most recently, a form of sharecropping has been proposed by Hodkinson, working from a mixture of textual hints such as Tyrtaeus ('Half of all the fruit that the tilled land yields') and ethnographic comparison (Hodkinson 1992). The implications of this arrangement will be further discussed below. Aside from the communal nature of their servitude, the Messenian helots differed from chattel slaves in other ways as well: living in self-reproducing family units, cultivating particular plots of land, speaking a common language, apparently enjoying a sense of corporate identity and purpose. The particular constitution of this subject people must have contributed to the Messenian ability to foment and organize revolt; the danger of enslaving peoples with the ability to take 'effective action in common' was noted, if largely in hindsight, by Athenian observers such as Plato (*Leg.* 777b–d) and Aristotle (*Pol.* 1330a) (Cartledge 1985; de Ste. Croix 1981: 93).

This sketch of helot organization is, so far, based entirely upon the sparse extant written sources. Little archaeological activity specifically pertinent to the period of Spartan conquest has yet been carried out in Messenia, not least because of modern perceptions of the epoch which were very much modelled on ancient attitudes (Alcock 2001; Spencer 1998). Exceptions to this rule are few but growing in number, and include regional survey projects. In this discussion, evidence for settlement and land use will be used to probe the nature of Spartan exploitation by asking very simply: where did Messenian helots live? (cf. Garnsey 1979).

### Where did Messenian helots live?

The bulk of our understanding of the Messenian landscape in the time of Spartan domination, the archaic and classical periods, comes from two sources: the University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition (henceforth UMME) and the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project (henceforth PRAP).<sup>2</sup> UMME, often now hailed as the first modern regional project in Greece, extensively explored most of modern-day Messenia and Triphylia (c. 3800 km<sup>2</sup>; Figure 13.1). The investigators' primary interests, fuelled by the discovery of the Palace of Nestor and numerous bronze age tombs, were focused on prehistory, especially the Mycenaean period. As one result, their treatment of historic material is somewhat more cursory, although the very fact they attempted such diachronic coverage is admirable for its time. The second project, PRAP, very much saw itself as a successor to UMME, investigating a smaller sample of the same terrain (Figure 13.1), of which some 40 km<sup>2</sup> were intensively surveyed (approximately one percent of the UMME study area; Figure 13.2). Greater stress was placed in this project upon the analysis of later material; it must be admitted, however

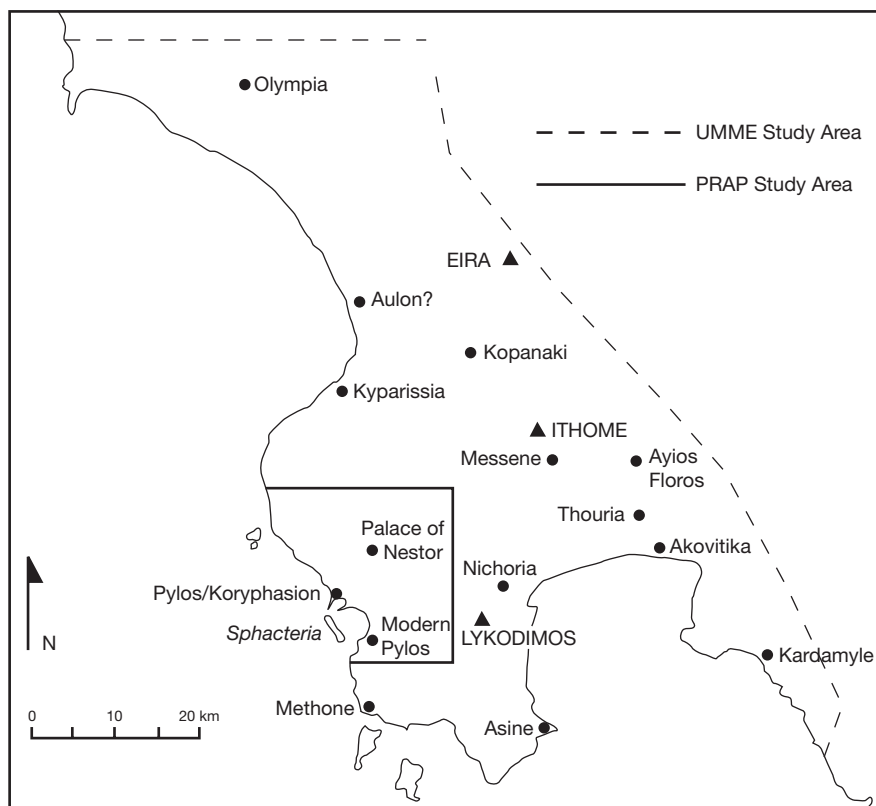


Figure 13.1 Southwestern Messenia, with principal places mentioned in the text.

paradoxically, that ceramic identification and dating – the backbone of surface reconnaissance studies – remain stronger for prehistoric than historic periods.

Beginning with the UMME data for the period of Spartan control, in the archaic period (c. 700–500 BCE), 29 habitation sites were observed, in a pattern pointing to the establishment of new settlements and the abandonment of sites from the preceding period, one crude measure of disruption in the landscape (McDonald and Hope Simpson 1972: 144–5). Little other specific information is available about settlement at that time. Site size estimates are provided in some instances, although these must be taken with great caution, since they lump together all surface scatters from what are often multi-period sites. As one rough indicator, however, it can be noted that the mean size for sites with reported archaic occupation is approximately three hectares (with a median of two ha.;  $n = 13$ ).<sup>3</sup> Sizes in this range would normally be interpreted as the remains of larger nucleated residences (hamlets or villages), rather than as isolated dwellings inhabited by one or two extended families. Such smaller

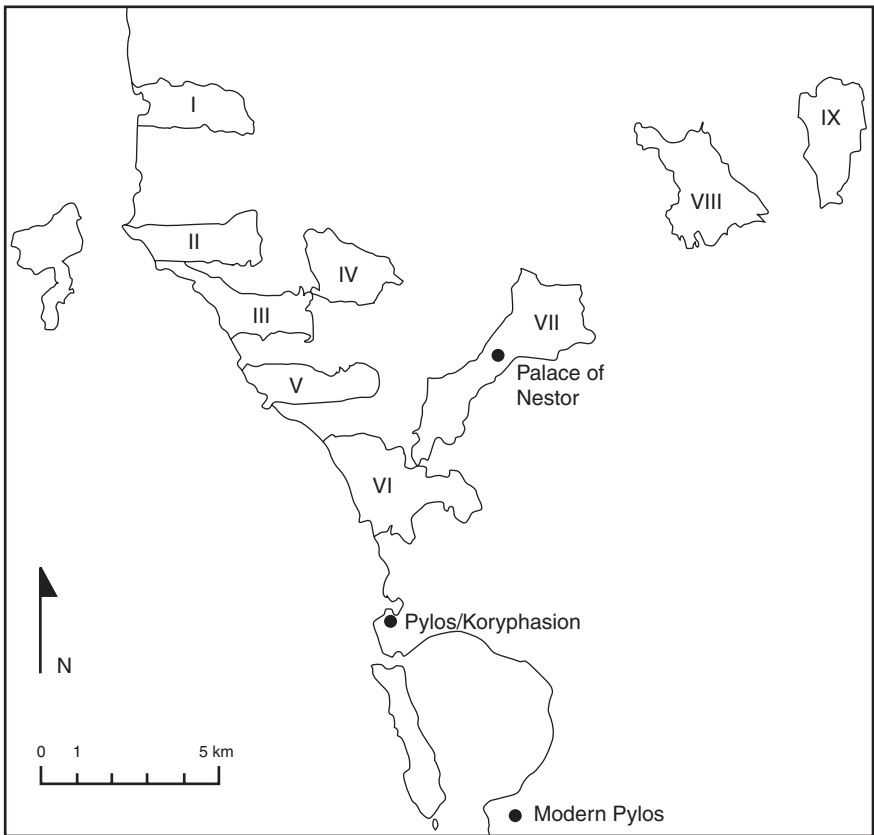


Figure 13.2 Study zone of the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, with the location of the nine intensively examined areas.

sites, which might have been either permanent farmsteads or seasonal shelters, are usually assessed in a size range of approximately 0.0–0.5 hectares.

Classical and hellenistic sites could not always be distinguished by UMME's pottery specialists, thus obviously eliding a potentially major disjunction in Messenian history. Most Greek survey chronologies notionally end the hellenistic period around the time of Actium (31 BCE), but UMME instead chose 146 BCE, the time of the Achaean War with Rome, as their closing date. These factors make it more difficult to assess patterns 'before' and 'after' Messenian liberation. What does emerge for the classical/hellenistic period (c. 500–146 BCE) is a marked increase in site numbers, threefold and more over archaic levels (with 118 habitation sites reported; McDonald and Hope Simpson 1972: 145). The same tentative evidence for larger groupings of people in the landscape continues (with a mean size of 2.2; median of 1.7 ha.,  $n = 54$ ).<sup>4</sup> Similar

patterns are sketched by a more localized survey in the hinterland of Nichoria, on the Gulf of Messenia (Lukermann and Moody 1978). This stands in contrast to the discovery of numerous small farmsteads which features in almost every other survey data set for classical and hellenistic Greece (Alcock et al. 1994: 157–65; Jameson et al. 1994: 248–57; 383–94; Snodgrass 1990). The wide territorial range covered by UMME suggests that not all of the sites reported for the era of Spartan domination were helot settlements, but, logically, many of them surely must be.

One of the initial questions that PRAP set out to answer was the extent to which this unusual pattern of nucleated settlement was the product of UMME's extensive modes of reconnaissance; it is an axiom of survey archaeology that the more closely you look, the more you are likely to find (Cherry 1983, Figure 1). The later project chose to concentrate on a region at the far western edge of Spartan holdings, in the hinterland of the Peloponnesian War stronghold of Pylos/Koryphasion. Figure 13.2 illustrates the nine areas intensively surveyed within this study region, areas ranging from coastal or near coastal plains (I, II, III, V) to more inland valleys (VIII, IX). Given the distance of definitely attested perioikic settlement from this study zone, there is no overwhelming reason to envisage the residents of this area as anything but of helot status.

Two principal patterns emerge from the PRAP results in archaic and classical times. First, although by no means 'deserted', as Thucydides (4.3.3) describes the area of ancient Pylos, this is not a densely packed landscape. Table 13.1 records the number of sherds discovered by tract collection, the initial level of reconnaissance across all surveyed areas, which can be dated (definitely or possibly) to the archaic through hellenistic periods (see Davis et al. 1997: 400–2 for project methodology).<sup>5</sup> The hellenistic period seems to signal a change, with the number of definitely dated hellenistic sherds almost double that of the archaic and classical periods combined and with the total number of hellenistic sherds (definite and possible) not far behind their combined numbers.<sup>6</sup> The second pattern is of a distinct 'clustering' of sherd scatters, and thus by inference of human settlement and other activities. Figure 13.3 presents the percentage of definitely dated material, by period, found in each of the nine

*Table 13.1* Tract sherd counts for Archaic-Hellenistic periods, Pylos Regional Archaeological Project

<i>Period</i>	<i>Definite</i>	<i>Possible</i>	<i>Total</i>
Archaic	30	146	176
Classical	31	304	335
Hellenistic	110	334	444
Geometric/Archaic	67	142	209
Geometric/Classical	142	275	417
Archaic/Classical	105	279	384
Archaic/Hellenistic	362	206	568

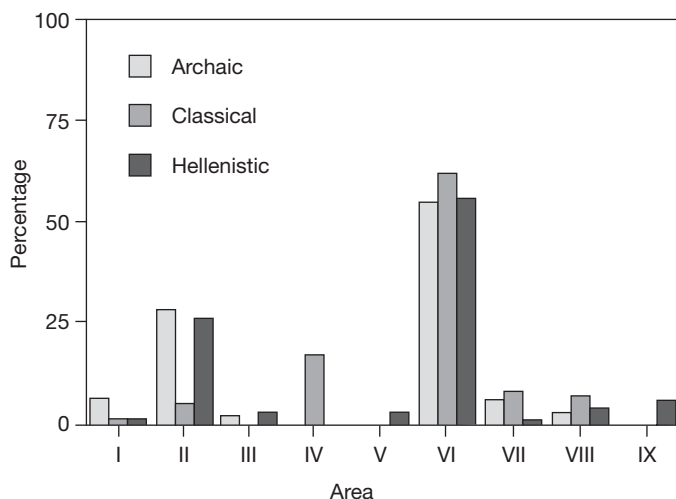


Figure 13.3 Percentage of definitely dated sherds, by period, found in each PRAP area.

surveyed areas.<sup>7</sup> The emphasis in both archaic and classical times on area VI, which lies north of the headland of ancient Pylos, is striking; for the archaic period another 'active' zone is area II, in the more northerly part of the survey territory. Low-level scatters of material appear in most of the other areas, although neither the coastal transect of area V nor the inland area IX produced a single sherd definitely dated to the period of Spartan domination.

The distribution of places designated as sites ('places of special interest' in PRAP terminology) follows a similar 'clustering' pattern (Table 13.2).<sup>8</sup> Of the six archaic sites, evidence is particularly strong for occupation at the two sites in area VI, I04 (Romanou *Romanou*) and E01 (Romanou *Glyfadaki*) which lie only 1.5 km from each other. Another pairing is visible with D01 (Gargaliani *Kanalos*) and D03 (Gargaliani *Megas Kambos* [2]), separated by just over 500 m. Neither of these appears as very large sites, although PRAP could explore only part of the settlement at Kanalos, and the site at Megas Kambos has been heavily disturbed by bulldozing and cultivation. Of the classical period's four sites, the two most productive come from area VI, with Romanou and I01 (Koryfasio *Beylerbey*), again only *c.* 1.5 km from each other. The maximum extent of surface scatter at Romanou, clearly the dominant settlement throughout the period of Spartan occupation, measures some 40 hectares in archaic times, and is even larger in the classical period. Parts of this ancient community undoubtedly lie under the modern village of Romanou, and it thus may have been even more extensive.

If the distribution of PRAP finds suggests that most of the areas surveyed were used with various degrees of intensity, then where did Messenian helots live? For the PRAP study area, the chief answer seems to be either in the large

Table 13.2 Distribution of sites, by period, identified in each PRAP area (Site numbers are given; n= number of sherds definitely assigned to the relevant period)

Area	Archaic	Classical	Hellenistic
I	1 (K01; n= 3)	0	1 (K01; n= 8)
II	2 (D01; D03; n=9, 4)	0	2 (D01, D03; n= 4, 156)
III	0	0	1 (G01; n= 17)
IV	0	1 (M02; n= 7)	1 (M04; n= 8)
V	0	0	2 (G02, G03; n= 12, 4)
VI	2 (E01, I04; n= 22, 25)	2 (I01, I04; n= 15, 31)	3 (E01, I01, I04; n= 458, 71, 65)
VII	1 (B07; n= 6)	0	0
VIII	0	1 (A06; n= 3)	2 (A04, A06; n= 16, 20)
IX	0	0	2 (L02, L07; n= 3, 39)

nucleation of Romanou or in smaller satellite settlements in its vicinity (such as Glyfadaki or Beylerbey). For the archaic period, another 'cluster' lay to the north with the sites at Kanalos and Megas Kambos [2]. The apparent diminution of activity at those particular sites in Classical times, together with other visible regional changes, make the important point that the period of Spartan control saw a far from static landscape.

Apart from such clusters, however, other, more isolated sites did exist. One of these (M02 Gargaliani *Kalantina* [2]) has tentatively been identified as a shrine during the period of Spartan domination, on the basis of its limited range of finds (including cups, a krater and possible kantharos) found concentrated on the edge of a natural sinkhole on the Gargaliani plateau (Davis 1998a: 277–8). Another (B07 Hora *Palace of Nestor Lower Town*) lies in the vicinity of the intensively investigated Bronze Age palatial centre. Only two other small sites are documented, over the course of the seventh to early fourth century, that might possibly fit the notion of a helot farmstead (K01 Gargaliani *Ordines*; A06 Metamorfosi *Ayios Konstantinos* [2]). Ordines and Ayios Konstantinos, however, are each represented by very few sherds, and thus might be explained, together with other traces of archaic and classical material, as the product of more seasonal dwellings or other forms of 'off-site' rural activity. In short, when it came to choosing their principal places of residence, the majority of the population clearly followed different, more communally-oriented preferences.

Excavations of domestic structures dating to this epoch are extremely rare. In the village of Kopanaki in the northern Soulima Valley, however, there was discovered a large building (c. 30 × 17 m), originally thought, on the basis of its size and sturdiness, to be a Late Roman villa. Ceramics dated its occupation, however, from the sixth century to a violent end in the second quarter of the fifth century BCE. The excavator came to propose the site as the substantial home of a Spartan landlord, with helots living in attendance and under his supervision; he associates the date of the structure's destruction with the helot



rebellion of the 460s (Harrison and Spencer 1998: 161–2; Kaltsas 1985). Whether or not Kaltsas is correct about the specific identity of the person-in-charge here, the image of helot workers, living in aggregation, links to more survey-derived patterns of communal dwelling. Still lacking is any evidence – either from excavation or from survey – for a *general* pattern of dispersed helot residence on their individual *kleroi*.

Turning to the subsequent hellenistic period (defined by the project as extending from roughly the mid-fourth to late first century BCE), PRAP traced a florescence of settlement and other signs of activity in the landscape, a pattern possibly (albeit more blurrily) seen in the UMME data as well. This is demonstrated most simply in Table 13.1, which records the total numbers of artifacts found in all tract collections; an almost four-fold increase is visible in the number of sherds definitely identified as hellenistic. Fourteen sites of Hellenistic date can be defined, compared to the six of archaic and four of classical date.

Activity is less ‘clustered’ as well. While area VI (with its hellenistic triumvirate of sites at Romanou, Glyfadaki and Beylerbey) continued to produce the most hellenistic material, sites are much more scattered across the landscape as a whole (Figure 13.3 and Table 13.2). The nature of settlement also changes in the post-liberation years, with the development of a more ‘normal’ hierarchy of sites: poleis (such as Pylos/Koryphasion), large villages (e.g. Romanou), and sites that can readily be identified as small rural farmsteads (e.g. two small sites in the newly inhabited area IX: L02 Maryeli *Farfa ti Rabi* [1] and L07 Ayioi Apostoloi *Palaiospitia*). Whatever political or institutional transformations accompanied the liberation of Messenia, the impact upon the rural landscape was decisive, at least in this southwestern portion of the region.

### Why do settlement patterns matter?

This absence of evidence for helot dispersal, given the archaeological history of Messenia, is still not ideal evidence for absence. Yet this observation does challenge previous hypotheses about helot residence, based on precious few, and ambiguous, textual references (e.g., Thuc. 5.34; Strabo 8.5.4; Livy 34.27.9). Insofar as they offered any opinions, most scholars preferred to imagine a kind of ‘divide and conquer’ strategy, with helots isolated each from the other for the greater security of their Spartan masters (Cartledge 1985: 43; Coulson and Wilkie 1983: 337; Lukermann and Moody 1978: 95; Powell 1988: 248; for a review of the arguments, see Harrison and Spencer 1998: 159–61). Aggregation has been a less popular scenario, although it too could be seen to work strategically from the Spartan point of view, with nucleated residence allowing for closer surveillance and easier collection of produce, either by Spartiates themselves or by their intermediaries (Lotze 1959: 38). Both hypotheses (which need not have been mutually exclusive across the territory of Messenia) begin, of course, from a Spartan perspective.

Adopting instead the Messenian point of view, we can begin with events such as the fifth century revolt, possibly reflected in the burning of the Kopanaki house. Surveillance did not always work against the power of local resistance, a power fostered by communal dwelling and the opportunities it provided to foster an active sense of Messenian identity and unity (Alcock in press). Messenian helots may have had another, more immediately pragmatic reason to prefer nucleated dwelling, and that is their vulnerability in time of agricultural shortage. Even though many parts of Messenia are famously fertile, 'bad year economics', resulting from climatic irregularities or social stress, were bound to occur, especially with a constant external drain on crop production (Halstead and O'Shea 1989). Lacking civic structures, and easy-to-hand, sympathetic access to Spartan patrons, Messenians would have to generate other systems of support. This suggests that local networks, facilitated by residential clustering and communication between settlements throughout the region, would be especially vital. In turn, such mutual support would again reinforce collective sentiments, with all their potentially incendiary force.

From the Spartan perspective, of course, the bottom line was the survival of helot workers, and the continued influx of helot-grown goods. And that may help to explain their otherwise less than predictable acceptance of nucleated Messenian settlement. Nucleation emerges here as something akin to Hodkinson's system of sharecropping in terms of articulating relations between the two parties. The nature of sharecropping, Hodkinson stressed, involves shared risk between cultivator and land-owner, a balance that offered 'the more secure arrangement for the Spartiate-helot relationship which was characterized by long-term mutual interdependence'. Sharecropping maximized labour inputs, in hopes of keeping the helots too busy to cause trouble, yet it also kept them alive; it would not force helots into revolt over rents, yet it allowed Spartiates to monitor agricultural activity and to make sure they received their due (Hodkinson 1992: 131–3, quotation at 131).<sup>9</sup>

Nucleated settlement worked in a similar fashion, allowing essential Spartan needs to be met adequately, while also providing helot families with some measure of security. Helots were controlled (for the most part) without demanding hugely distracting investments of Spartiate time and effort. Within the helot communities, it is probable that more internal divisions developed, perhaps represented by the term *monomoitos* found in the late Roman lexicon of Hesychios and glossed as 'leader of helots'. Such individuals would straddle – as someone must in such circumstances – the gap between central authority and obligation on the one hand, and local loyalties and needs on the other (Hodkinson n.d.). No doubt such stratification was encouraged, possibly leading to what Scott called 'the ultimate dream of domination: to have the dominated exploit each other' (Scott 1985: 302; Cartledge 1987: 174). Both risks and benefits were shared here in a balancing act that, obviously, ultimately broke down in rejection and revolt – but the system worked for a very long time.

The relationship of Spartiates and helots is often, and understandably, seen in highly polarized terms – with Spartiates murdering and humiliating helots, who in turn were willing to ‘eat the Spartiates raw’ (Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.6). Through the lens of settlement and economic relations, however, the interaction between the two groups emerges in some senses as more a matter of dialogue and of compromise, giving us a more nuanced picture of how this relationship was played out literally on the ground.

## Conclusion

More could be said about how this dialogue differed across the territorial extent of Spartan holdings, especially given the far western area surveyed by PRAP; the time is rapidly approaching when the settlement patterns of Messenian helots can be contrasted with those of their Laconian counterparts (Cavanagh et al. 1996; Mee and Cavanagh 1998). Other dimensions of Messenian life could also be drawn into the discussion, not least archaeological evidence for cult practices – at sanctuaries, at ancient tombs – which also illustrate acts of symbolic unity, internal economic differentiation, and, arguably, resistance to their lot. The ‘impact’ of exploitation was felt not only in the economic sphere, but in helot memories and rituals, and, once free, in their political allegiances. The converse impact of the ‘helot problem’ on Spartan ideology has long been discussed; contemplating the implications of conquest on the hearts and minds of the Messenians is just beginning (cf. Brumfiel 2001, for parallel discussions in the Aztec world).

In the hearts and minds of ancient historians and classical archaeologists, the words ‘exploitation’ and ‘Messenia’ are closely associated, and that is as it should be. But as this case study and other ongoing work are beginning to demonstrate, exploitation – of resources, of people – can work out in complicated and not always completely predictable fashions. Agreeing that such exploitative behaviour occurred in the past may be a simple matter, but agreeing the details of its practice and its long-term influence is not. These complexities can be recovered, if only ever to a limited extent, with the help of archaeology, and in particular through regional archaeological investigations – analyses which could perhaps take on a more prominent role in discussions of the Greek economy than they have so far been called upon to play. The academic pursuit of ‘gain’ and ‘loss’ can and should take many forms, but local-level, archaeologically impelled studies should be recognized as one significant way to proceed. It is also a way that forbids circumvention, or minimization, of the fact that in the past people could and did live, like the Messenians, in an ‘altogether cruel and bitter condition’ (Theopomp. fr. 13) – however much (or little) they could negotiate the terms of their deal.

## NOTES

- 1 Thanks to the organizers of the KERGOS conference and to fellow participants, as well as to Paul Cartledge, John F. Cherry, Jack Davis, Steve Hodkinson and Nino Luraghi for comments on this paper (and in the case of Hodkinson and Luraghi for allowing me to read very stimulating unpublished work). Remaining problems are all my own. I am grateful to Geoff Compton and Melanie Grunow for help with artwork. The Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, carried out under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies, was co-directed by J.L. Davis, S.E. Alcock, J. Bennet, Y. Lolos and C. Shelmerdine, and supported by major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute for Aegean Prehistory and the National Geographic Society. For full acknowledgements, see Davis et al. 1997: 488.
- 2 For UMME: McDonald and Rapp 1972; Rapp and Aschenbrenner 1978; McDonald and Wilkie 1992; McDonald et al. 1983; McDonald 1984. For PRAP: Davis et al. 1997; Davis 1998b; Zangger et al. 1997; <http://classics.lsa.umich.edu/PRAP.html>.
- 3 This calculation is based on McDonald and Rapp 1972: 264–321 ('Register A: Prehistoric Habitation Sites'; 'Register B: Post-Mycenaean Habitation Sites') and uses data only for sites with definite attestation of archaic material. Overall site numbers are drawn from this same source, and include both definite and possible identifications.
- 4 These calculations include sites identified as occupied in either the classical or hellenistic periods, or both. Figures for sites specifically identified with hellenistic, but no classical, material tend to be smaller (mean of 1.2; median of 1 ha.; n = 13), suggesting that smaller sites emerge later in this period. This pattern is reinforced by the findings of PRAP.
- 5 In tract collection, all sherds or lithic artifacts were counted; all potentially diagnostic material was collected. Tract walking provides a uniform level of information across the entire area intensively surveyed by PRAP.
- 6 It should be noted that these numbers are not final. Overlapping categories, such as geometric/archaic, include all material that could definitely or possibly belong to any portion of that time-span; it thus embraces the individual categories of 'geometric' and 'archaic'.
- 7 Numbers here have been 'weighted' to account for differences in the areal extent of the nine surveyed zones.
- 8 'Sites' are here defined as dense surface concentrations of material with three or more sherds definitely attributable to a specific period.
- 9 Cartledge (1993: 132) takes Hodkinson up sharply for his application of terms such as 'sharecropping tenant' to the helots, characterizing it as 'unusually inappropriate and rather grossly misleading'. I understand Cartledge's concern that such titles misrepresent the helots' fundamentally vulnerable position, but I am not sure that this invalidates sharecropping as an economic relationship between Spartiate and helot, a relationship which allowed some necessary degree of negotiation and compromise – although the Spartiates obviously always held the whip hand.

# THE STRATEGIES OF MR THEOPOMPOS

*John K. Davies*

At some uncertain date, probably within the decade 420 to 410 BCE, a son was born to an Athenian not so far known to fame, Charidemos 49 from Oion. The purpose of this chapter is to trace, from the two surviving law-court speeches Isaeus 11 and [Demosthenes] 43, the known activity of that son, Theopompos 54, in order to illustrate what the theme of this volume, *kerdos*, could mean in practice. Inevitably, it is derivative from the presentation of the family's affairs given in *Athenian Propertied Families* (at 2921, pp.71–89 of the 1971 edition: at **Bouselos 1 from Oion** in the forthcoming new edition), but differs therefrom in that it focuses first and foremost on Theopompos himself, and does so because his personality and his strategies can to some degree be discerned. Much of what follows here hangs on family relationships. They are mostly not in dispute, but they are complex, so that readers new to the intricacies of Athenian prosopography will probably find it helpful to be guided visually by the family tree presented in Figure 14.1. Both there and in the text (as will be the case in *APF*<sup>2</sup>) the identification-numbers given to each individual (e.g., 'Theopompos 54') are those assigned in *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* (LGPN) II. Male relatives identifiable but not named are cited as M1, M2, etc., female relatives likewise as F1, F2, etc. Relatives whose gender is unstated are identified as P1, P2, etc. Adoptions are signalled by arrowed lines. For detailed discussion about dates and relationships the reader is referred back to the sections of the entry in *APF*<sup>1</sup> or *APF*<sup>2</sup>: section numbers will not change in *APF*<sup>2</sup>.

Since Theopompos' activities are intelligible only within the wider family context, that context needs to be sketched first. By the time of his birth the family was already of some standing. His great-grandfather Bouselos 1, probably active in the second quarter of the fifth century and seen on all sides as the family's *Abnherr*, had acquired (we are not told how) sufficient property for it to be divisible among no fewer than five sons ([Dem.] 43.19). Consistently, one of those sons, Theopompos' great-uncle Euboulides 27, had had landed property sufficient to rate him in the topmost Solonian class of *Pentekosiomedimnoi*, a



status which was reflected in his service as one of the Treasurers of the Sacred Monies of Athene in 441/0 (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 363* = Meiggs and Lewis 1988: no. 55, lines 10–11). Theopompos' uncle Euktemon 39 had served (or was to serve) as Archon Basileus ([Dem.] 43.42–3),<sup>1</sup> while the sheer facts of the intra-family quarrels over property and of their documentation make it clear that family holdings continued to be worth quarrelling about.

What is more, insofar as we are able to reconstruct it, the family tree shows a noticeably bounded appearance. That is not just the accidental effect of trying to map known relatives onto a single network, for it reflects four forms of family behaviour. The first is marriage within the kin. Since this has already been extensively discussed by Thompson 1967, Humphreys 1980, and Cox 1998: 4ff., it is sufficient to list the detectable instances in approximate chronological order.

- 1 That of Philagros 25 to his father's brother's daughter Phylomache 1 ([Dem.] 43.24, 44, and 45: for the problem of her legitimacy, contested by Theopompos, see *APF* V(b) and VII) may have been the first, for since their granddaughter Phylomache 2 was born by 375 at the absolute latest her father Euboulides 28 will have been born to this marriage by 400 at the latest, more probably at least 10 to 15 years earlier.
- 2 Perhaps the second was that of Philagros' brother Kallistratos 99 to F6, his father's brother's son's daughter ([Dem.] 43.73, with *APF* VI). Again, the marriage is not datable precisely within the last quarter of the fifth century, but cannot have been much after 420 in view of the age of its issue F7 (no. (iv) below).
- 3 The third such marriage was that of Polemon 20 to F5, his father's brother's son's daughter (Isae. 11.8 and 17). Since F5's brother Stratios 15's son was born by 401, while her own son Hagnias 15 must have been born by 410,<sup>2</sup> a date for her marriage in the decade 420 to 410 would fit well enough.
- 4 For the next attested instance we have to move down two generations, to the marriage of Sositheos 1 with Phylomache 2, his mother's father's brother's son's daughter ([Dem.] 43.13, with *APF* VI), probably in the 360s.
- 5 Lastly, one more generation down, a daughter of marriage (iv), F15, married M6, her father's brother's son ([Dem.] 43.74): this was clearly a recent event *c.* 341, since Sositheos anticipates offspring from it but can name none as yet ([Dem.] 43.74).

These are the within-kin marriages that are detectable. There may well have been more, for our information comes almost entirely through Sositheos 1, whose knowledge and preoccupations, understandably enough, focused on his own immediate lineage.

Besides that pattern of behaviour stands another, that of marrying within the deme of Oion. One example is near-certain, that of the second marriage (by *c.* 410) of Phanostratos' daughter F5, her husband being (as we now know)

Glauketes 19 from Oion (*Agora* XV 13, lines 85–6, with *APF* X). A second highly probable example is the marriage of Oinante 9, who seems, if Kirchner's inferences are right, to have been a daughter of Habron 26 or of Kleokritos 9, to have married into another family from Oion, and to have been the ancestor of Stratonides 6 and 7 and of Straton 98 and 99 from Oion ([Dem.] 36.36, with Reinmuth 1971: no. 15, line 9 and *APF* XIII). Less weight can be placed on this aspect of family behaviour, since the demes of other spouses such as Sosias 14 or F8, the wife of Stratokles 30, are unknown.

A third pattern of behaviour, also well-explored in the literature,<sup>3</sup> is that of adoption within the kin. Again it is sufficient to list known instances in chronological order: the rationale will be discussed further below. Since in several cases there is much doubt whether the adoption resulted from a genuine decision taken *in vivo* by the adopter, it is wisest to present each of these instances in the form 'X was adopted by Y'.

- 1 At an unknown date Eupolemos 1 was adopted by his mother's father Archimachos ([Dem.] 43.37 and 45, with *APF* VI).
- 2 F10 was adopted by her parent's brother Hagnias 15 before his death in the 370s (Isae. 11.8).
- 3 In or by 369 Stratokles 30's daughter F11 was adopted by her mother's brother Theophon 1 by will (Isae. 11.41).
- 4 Makartatos 3 was adopted into the *oikos* of Makartatos 2 as the latter's son (Isae. 11.49; [Dem.] 43.77).
- 5 Euboulides 29 was transferred into the phratry of his mother's father Euboulides 28 as the latter's adopted son, after the death of Theopompos 54 in the late 340s ([Dem.] 43.14, with *APF* VI).
- 6 M7, the son of Makartatos 3, was adopted into the *oikos* of Makartatos 2 as the latter's son in the late 340s ([Dem.] 43.78).

Fourth, last, and most public of the forms of family behaviour which can usefully be singled out is the use of a long-lived family grave-plot. As Theopompos's younger relative Sositheos 1 was to describe it in the late 340s,

There is a grave-plot which is common to all those who are descended from Bouselos. It is called the 'grave-plot of the Bouselidai', a large enclosed space according to the custom of the ancients. In this grave-plot lie all the others who are descended from Bouselos, both Hagnias (14) and Euboulides (27) and Polemon (20) and all the others, being so many relatives, the descendants of Bouselos, all these share in this grave-plot.

([Dem.] 43.79)

As Humphreys noted in the course of her extensive survey of family grave-groups in archaic and classical Attica, by the time of the speech the peribolos



described here may have held up to 22 members of the family: 'both archaeological and epigraphic evidence suggests that groups of this size were unusual' (Humphreys 1980: 116 [1993: 111]). It is unfortunate that Sositheos provides no hint of its location.<sup>4</sup> We can probably visualize it as being comparable to the archaic cemetery at Vari, in use from the late seventh to the mid-fifth centuries and comprising at least 39 graves, which was excavated by Oikonomos and Stavropoulos in the 1930s<sup>5</sup> and is illustrated by Humphreys 1980: 109, Figure 2 [1993: 100, Figure 2]. By the fourth century, as Sositheos suggests, such communal grave-plots were unusual. Whether its creation and continued use reflect genuine archaism, as he implies, or an archaizing desire to be seen to be doing the traditional thing, is indeterminable, though Sositheos' repeated use of the somewhat old-fashioned word *mnêma* to denote the peribolos deserves note. In any case we are left with a sense of a user group with an unusually well-developed sense of its own identity through time.

To this picture of family solidarity and inwardness Theopompos presents a marked contrast. Of his immediate background little can be said. His father Charidemos is no more than a name ([Dem.] 43.22, 24, and 48), and his mother's name and family are unidentified (as so often). One brother of his is known, Stratokles 30 (Isae. 11.10, 37, and 40–1), who bears a name one root of which recalls that of Charidemos' father Stratios 14. It is therefore fractionally more likely that Theopompos was the younger son, surviving his brother's death c. 360 (Isae. 11.10). Theopompos' own name is so common, with 82 bearers of it listed in *LGPN* II from 27 demes, that no inference whatever can be drawn from it.

His first identifiable act, his marriage, already sends a signal of individuality, for he married out: his wife F9, daughter of Apolexis 26 of Prospalta, is the only spouse in this whole family nexus who is known to be from a different deme (and a distant one too).<sup>6</sup> Not that too much should be made of that, for at the risk of forcing the scraps of evidence we have, the aspect which may matter more is that he, like his brother, probably married into a cavalry family, for the extreme rarity of the name Makartatos, given by Apolexis to F9's brother and by Theopompos to his second son, makes it far more likely than not that F9 was descended from the cavalryman Makartatos 1 who was killed at Tanagra (Paus. 1. 29.1 and *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 1288, with *APF* XII). Though the hint is tenuous, and though recent work<sup>7</sup> has concentrated more on societal attitudes towards cavalry than on the collective attitudes of the cavalrymen themselves, it may not be unduly fanciful to conjecture that an *esprit de corps* among cavalrymen might cut across links of deme and family to create alternative nexuses.

Second, and fundamentally, Theopompos comes across as a ruthless accumulator, deploying strategies of acquisition which made him a disruptive member of his own birth family. They rested essentially on exploiting the inheritance law and the adoption law to their limit and beyond in order to acquire and retain possession of his relatives' estates. The first two identifiable instances concern his wife's brothers Chaireleos 6 and Makartatos 2, allegations

about whose estates Theopompos is concerned to rebut at Isae. 11.47–50. Chaireleos predeceased his brother, leaving an estate at Prospalta worth ‘not more than 30 *mnai* [3000 dr.]’ (Isae. 11.49). Since Theopompos’ opponents claimed he had come to possess three *kleroi* (a term discussed further below) (Isae. 11.47), one of them must have been Chaireleos’, but we are given no hint of how the transfer occurred. We have more information about that of Makartatos, whom Theopompos claims to have sold his land, bought a trireme, and sailed off to Crete, only to lose life and property there (Isae. 11.48–9), probably as a condottiere in the late 380s (*APF* XII; Casson 1995). Theopompos’ response, allegedly at his wife’s persuasion, was to have their (younger?) son Makartatos 3 posthumously adopted into Prospalta as Makartatos 2’s son (Isae. 11.49, with Lewis 1959 on 11.50). Since a lost speech of Lysias ‘On the half-inheritance of the property of Makartatos’ (lxxxvi Sauppe-Thalheim) mentioned Prospalta (fr. 164 Sauppe) and therefore undoubtedly concerned Theopompos’ in-laws, his assertion that Makartatos’ property vanished with him can safely be deemed false, and the motive for the adoption can equally safely be deemed to have emerged, not from *pietas* or wifely cajolings, nor even just from the desire to avoid liturgies (as Theopompos states his opponents alleged, Isae. 11.47 and 49), but from the desire to acquire at least half of the estate. It is unfortunate that we cannot ascertain for which party Lysias wrote the speech: if for Theopompos himself, it would attest a further strategy, viz. an early realization of the advantage to be gained from using the best speech-writers.

Perhaps encouraged by these acquisitions, some twenty years later Theopompos set his sights on a bigger target, the estate of his second cousin Hagnias 15, worth 2 talents at the absolute minimum (Isae. 11.44). It became available when Hagnias’ niece and adopted daughter F10 had died, it seems in the late 360s (Isae. 11.8, with *APF* IX), and when it had initially passed by will to Glaukon 30 and then after his death to Phylomache 2, by a court decision of 361/0 ([Dem.] 43.31). If we are to believe the narrative of Sositheos 1, Theopompos’ technique of challenging that decision consisted of making a succession of collusive agreements with rival claimants, possibly with the help of bribery, stacking the odds at the court hearing of the *diadikasia* by maximizing the number of counter-claimants to Phylomache 2, gaining a court verdict in his favour, and then repudiating those agreements ([Dem.] 43.7ff., 29, and 38, with Theopompos’ own version at Isae. 11.15f., 20–2, and 24f.). The justice or otherwise of the court’s decision fortunately need not be debated here.<sup>8</sup>

Last, Theopompos moved in on the estate of his brother’s wife’s brother Theophon 1. Theophon had died c. 369, and his very substantial estate, worth at least two and a half talents (Isae. 11.41–2 with *APF* XIV), had passed to his adopted daughter F11, the daughter of his sister F8 and of Theopompos’ brother Stratokles 30. Stratokles had allegedly increased its value substantially before his own death c. 360, whereupon Theopompos had become one of two guardians of Stratokles’ not yet adult son M4. It can count as certain that at some stage in the earlier *diadikasia* proceedings Theopompos had bought off his fellow

guardian's claim to the estate of Hagnias by promising to cede half the estate to M4 in the event of success in the *diadikasia*, and had then reneged on the bargain (Isae. 11.24f. and 32f.; [Dem.] 43.7; *APF* XI). Behind the claim that Theopompos was ill-treating his ward, which constituted the formal point at issue in the hearing for which Isaeus 11 was written, probably therefore lies a set of manoeuvres by Theopompos to maximize his share of Theophon's estate, but it is impossible to discern the details. To obscure them was, of course, part of the purpose of (again?) employing the best speech-writer in the business, this time Isaeus in spite of his advanced age, whose 'wizardry' (Dion. Hal. *Isaens* 4) is nowhere better in view than in his efforts on behalf of Theopompos. The fee-bargaining between the two men must have been epic.

What are we to make of this as an exemplification of *kerdos*? It may be useful to begin by identifying the underlying assumptions. First, land-holding within Attica was seen here as a zero-sum game (there is no hint in either speech of bringing new land into use or of exploiting *eschatiiai*, though the clear evidence from [Dem.] 42 that Phainippos was doing just that in the 340s reminds us that such a procedure was still possible): if X has more, Y has less. Second, there is a deeply-embedded notion of the *kleros* as a stable unit through time, literally and etymologically the 'allotted share' of physical estate which continues as an entity. Thus, the *kleros* of Hagnias at Araphen, said by Theopompos to be worth 2 talents but no more though later described by Sositheos as a notable sight (Isae. 11.44; [Dem.] 43.69), continues to be thought of, and to be worked, as an entity some 30 years after Hagnias' death. Again, Theopompos speaks of the 'half-*kleros*' which he and his brother Stratokles each inherited (Isae. 11.22, 24, 30), and cites the accusation made against him that he has taken possession of three *kleroi* (Isae. 11.47), with its interesting implication that such an accumulation was seriously improper while being nonetheless intelligible and practicable with luck and skill. Indeed, the speeches help to show why (as Finley noted long ago) a genuine market in land is barely perceptible in Athens except at the margins or when public action via confiscation made land available. Clearly the normal assumption was that an owner hung onto it till death, at which point relatives swarmed round like flies and it passed (by will, adoption, family agreement or legal process) as a unit or as two half-units to the next owner. Yet, equally, they help to show that the absence of a land-market is not evidence of primitive and undeveloped economic life.

For there are two counter-considerations, which point in a different direction. The first comprises the three references in the speeches to sale, each as odd as the other. Chronologically the first is Theopompos' reference to Makartatos 2 'selling' his land (Isae. 11.48). Given the doubts expressed above that this can be the whole truth, it is legitimate to surmise that the term 'sell' here conceals a process of raising capital via pledge or *prasis epi lusei* ['sale with the option of redemption']. The second is Theopompos' reference in Isaeus 11.43 to the sale of the movables (equipment, animals, crops) of Theophon's estate, realizing no less than 4900 drachmai, and the third is Sositheos' allegation that even while

the dispute over the ownership of Hagnias' estate was continuing, Theopompos (and others, for he uses plural verbs) 'were digging out and were stripping the ovules off the thousand plus olive trees on Hagnias' land at Araphen, which they sold, and made a huge sum of money' ([Dem.] 43.69–70).<sup>9</sup> On this evidence, and in this family, land itself was not being seen as yielding extravagant profits, but could be used for windfall gain or as security for getting the means to engage in a different kind of gainful activity.

The second, more general, counter-consideration comprises just such gainful activities. For example, in what became the estate of Theophon's daughter a house in Melite was bought for 3000 drachmai, and one in Eleusis for 500 drachmai, which were rented out for 300 drachmai (Isae. 11.42–3). Given the enormous price of the Melite 'house', it was presumably a large *synoikia*, i.e., a lodging-house or a rent-yielding multiple dwelling, and we are plainly looking at investment in real estate for the sake of a cash return. Nor is such a practice exceptional, for when Theopompos presents the jury with lists of the components of various family estates in Isae. 11.40–4, he starts with landed property and goes on to movables, animals, money, and loans. I argued long ago (Davies 1981: 38–72) that this was the normal pattern, as is exemplified here by the rent from the leasing-out of Theophon's daughter's estate, by a sum of c. 4000 drachmai lent out at 18 per cent interest per annum, by a sum of 900 drachmai 'within "the house"' [i.e., in ready cash], and by a sum of nearly 1000 drachmai lent out on *eranos*-loans [non interest-bearing] which were due for repayment. It is as if a monetary economy has been superimposed on, and grown out of, a continuing pre-monetary, land-based economy, the pattern being that once actual money has accumulated – whether by fair means or foul, by windfall profits or booty from military service or whatever – some stays 'within', some flows elsewhere within a framework of reciprocity, and some is put to work: *ergon* is Theopompos' actual word (Isae. 11.42).

Isaeus is far too clever to let Theopompos use the word *kerdos*: if we move from one speech to the other, one man's careful and praiseworthy *epimeleia* ('stewardship') of his property so as to increase its value (Isae. 11.39) is another man's *hybris* ('arrogance') and *paranomia* ('illegal behaviour') ([Dem.] 43.71). Yet, if we disinter the actual patterns of behaviour, and are not misled by the oratorical packaging, *kerdos* there is in plenty.

## NOTES

- 1 Listed by Develin 1989: 290 as holding office within period VII (377/6–353/2), but as the son of Euboulides 27 he is far more likely to have held office in the late fifth century.
- 2 Dates for Hagnias have been recalibrated from those given in *APF*<sup>1</sup>. I accept, as Cox 1998: 6 does not, the redating of his death to the 370s by Humphreys 1983b.
- 3 See *imprimis* Rubinstein 1993. Of those listed in the text, (i) does not figure in her own list, the others being respectively 120 no. 13, 121 no. 17, 123 no. 23, 123 no. 24, and 123 no. 27. She adds as 120 no. 16 an adoption of Glaukon 30 by Hagnias 15 on the basis of Isae. 11.8–9 and [Dem.] 43.4, but neither text shows

explicitly that the testamentary reversion of the estate to Glaukon was to be accompanied by an adoption. However Cox 1998: 16, not citing Rubinstein, also posits such a secondary adoption.

- 4 Now that the family deme Oion Kerameikon is being seen as an inland deme, of unknown location (Thompson 1970: 65; Traill 1986: 131, 124 for the distinction between it and its homonym Oion Dekeleikon), no link with the Kerameikos cemetery is plausible.
- 5 Full references in Humphreys 1980: 108 n.25 [=1993: 127 n.25].
- 6 Prospalta, located well east of Hymettos in the southern Mesogeia (Traill 1975: 48), was well away from any possible site of Oion Kerameikon.
- 7 Spence 1993: 164–230 focuses almost entirely on Athenian attitudes *towards* their cavalry, but notes that grave-stelae and ceramic evidence attest cavalric self-perception (199–202).
- 8 Wyse 1904: 673–4 and 690; Miles 1950; *APF* V, X, XI and XII.
- 9 The words are *exorutton* and *exepremnizon*. Sositheos presumably wants the jury to think that Theopompos was sacrilegiously uprooting olive trees, but Lin Foxhall helpfully tells me that the process was that of removing the enlarged ovules from the foot of the tree which could be sold (even more profitably than wood, though with the risk of severe damage to the tree) for use as nursery stock (cf. Theoph. *Hist. pl.* 1.8.6).

# ACCESS TO RESOURCES IN CLASSICAL GREECE

## The egalitarianism of the polis in practice

*Lin Foxhall*

### Introduction

Access to resources has been an underlying theme in the debates about ‘the Greek city’, specifically the relationship between political institutions and economic structures. The ways in which different scholars from at least the time of Weber have construed these relationships offer an interesting insight into the historiography of the polis. The purpose of this paper is to consider how particular sources of wealth were distributed and who had access to them, exploring what this analysis reveals both about the ideals of modern scholarship and the realities of the polis itself.

The idea of access to resources is closely linked, inevitably, to the distribution of resources. For much of the ancient world, notably Rome, but also Egypt, the Near East, the city-states and small kingdoms of the Levant, Cyprus and Anatolia, and the Hellenistic kingdoms, it has been taken for granted that both access to and distribution of resources were limited to an elite group of some sort and unequally distributed among the population overall. In contrast, the archaic-classical Greek polis, more or less between the sixth and fourth centuries BCE, has been held up as the great exception by scholars working from a surprisingly broad range of political and ideological perspectives (Snodgrass 1980: 46; Finley 1981e, 1981f; Morris 1989: 8–9, 216–17, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 2000; Murray 1993: 68; Hanson 1995). The egalitarian political ideals attributed to poleis, especially democratic ones, have cast a rosy glow onto many modern reconstructions of the relationships between wealth, power and political status in Greek cities. That the radical Athenian democracies of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE provide much of our information only deepens this glow, though it is generally recognized that the principles in operation here cannot be freely extrapolated to other Greek city-states.

Some recent studies of ‘the Greek economy’ (Meikle 1979, Cohen 1992), especially in the US, have depicted the economies of ancient Greece as complex,

sophisticated and essentially monetized and market-driven. Nonetheless it is generally accepted that politics, *sensu lato*, and the economy were inextricably linked in Greek poleis, though the precise ways in which they were connected, and the implications of these connections for our understanding of ancient Greece are more contentious. These very clear ties between the political and economic realms have for some scholars underpinned the argument that the political egalitarianism of ancient democracy overshadowed or even cancelled out the significance of the acknowledged economic inequalities: the 'paradox' of the polis (e.g., Morris 1987: 208–10, 216–17, 1994a, 1996; Ober 1989: 192–247, esp. 240–7; Sagan 1991: 86–94; Hanson 1995: 181–201). Similarly, there has been an increasing tendency, especially in American scholarship, to address modern political issues (especially American ones) through the study of the Greek city. Again, the interlinking of politics and economic life has featured in these works (e.g. Sagan 1991; Roberts 1994; Hanson 1995).

In this chapter I have focused on land for two reasons: first because it was the most critical economic resource for the inhabitants of Greek city-states, and second because it is closely linked with political status via citizenship. This is a position paper intended to spark debate, not a systematic review of scholarship on the subject. However, in the course of presenting an argument on which I hold strong views, I also hope to present, without undue distortion, a range of others' views which collectively sum up the state of the art on the significance of landed wealth in Greek poleis. I have used the arguments presented in Hanson's provocative and thoughtful book *The Other Greeks* (1995) at several points as a launching pad, not least because he so clearly presents and consolidates lines of argument scattered throughout recent scholarship.

### Land and landowners

'Land' includes not only agricultural land but also the capital installations which accompany it such as threshing floors, cisterns, etc., as well as houses and outbuildings, and urban property. As such it was one of the most important points of intersection between politics and the economy, representing the fundamental means of primary production, the main focus of capital investment and a (probably *the*) primary manifestation of political enfranchisement. Access to land, therefore, was critical to physical, social and political survival for most people in the ancient world. There is no question that such access was unequally distributed, and that the main route was via inheritance (see below and Davies, this volume). However, the impact of this inequality for political life, especially in democracies founded on egalitarian ideals, has been a subject of debate. I believe the implications rock the very foundations of democratic ideals, though others do not find them so disturbing (see Morris 1994a: 362–3; Jameson, this volume).

It has often been maintained that the ideal of equality was endemic to Greek notions of land ownership, the primary means of access to this most critical



resource (Weber 1976: 165–7; Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 123; Murray 1993: 164). The political philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, particularly their discussions of the principles for the equal division of land in ideal states, have also been influential in modern debates. Most recently, Hanson (1995: 181–219) has made a brave attempt to argue for a system of roughly equal holdings which started with the ‘homesteading’ farmers of the emerging poleis in the eighth century, but remained relatively stable as both ideal and reality down to the fourth century:

So what arose at the beginning of the Greek polis period, then, was a concept that survived in some form to the end of the fourth century and indeed in a sense even into our own times: a belief that there should be *no* large farm property, *no* radical inequality in the holding of rural property, and, by extension, no extremely rich or poor citizens in the polis.

(Hanson 1995: 182)

So strong was the egalitarian spirit that even during the erosion of the agricultural polis in the fourth century BC at Athens when we hear of complaints about the size of farm plots, there were still apparently no large holdings.

(Hanson 1995: 186–7)

In contrast, two attempts to construct a land-holding spectrum for classical Attica (Osborne 1992; Foxhall 1992), the region for which most detailed information exists, independently concluded that a considerable proportion of agricultural land was in the hands of a wealthy minority. Osborne (1992: 24) calculated that about 7.5 per cent of the population owned around 30 per cent of the land; I concluded (Foxhall 1992: 157–8) that about 9 per cent of households owned around 35 per cent of the land, and may have controlled a further 10 per cent or so of the land via leases, mostly from corporate bodies (see Osborne 1988). Though the two sets of calculations were differently formulated the results are remarkably similar.

Recently, Morris (1994a: 362–5) has questioned these conclusions, and their implications. He cites data derived from archaeological survey in Greece and further afield in the Greek world, interpreting the distribution of ‘farmstead’ sites in the later archaic and classical periods as evidence for dispersed rural settlement exploiting consolidated ‘farms’. However, these survey data are open to a range of other interpretations, explored in more detail below, and Morris’ explanation is not the only one possible (Foxhall 2000).

The most important means of access to land in the cities of classical and probably archaic Greece was through inheritance (Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 126–8; Burford 1993: 37–48). In most cities in most periods the principle of partible inheritance dominated: sons received equal shares of property. In



classical Athens, it seems to have been the case that daughters also received equal shares of the patrimony, but these were smaller than sons' shares, and in cash or other moveable property, not land, by preference at least, if not by law (Foxhall 1989). In other parts of the Greek world, e.g., fifth-century Gortyn, sons inherited land preferentially over daughters. Even in Sparta, the inheritance of privately owned land remained an important source of wealth (Hodkinson 1986, 1989). Where landholdings were linked to active political participation, whether that meant holding high office or a place in the *syssitia*, the strategy of ensuring that most land ended up in the hands of men became self-justifying.

From Hesiod's *Works and Days* onward, inheritance disputes are a leitmotif of Greek culture. One could argue that the principle of equality in partible inheritance is more negative than positive. That is, it was (and is) less a matter of delight in the principles of equality and justice than fear of getting less than another or being done out of one's due. In consequence, whenever possible, specific types of resources (e.g., trees, household goods, arable land, irrigated land, etc.) are subdivided into equal shares, so that there is a tendency for landed property to both fragment and recombine over several generations (Forbes 1982: 131–54; Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 128). This is accompanied by a tendency for agricultural holdings to be scattered, rather than consolidated.

Hanson's and Morris' stress on the relatively small size of classical Athenian farm plots may thus be something of a red herring. Certainly there is no secure archaeological (Foxhall 2000: 488–91) or textual evidence for large-scale consolidated holdings, and individual plot sizes (to judge from the little we know about them) are small. The available evidence still strongly suggests that most 'farms' were composed of a number of individual plots, and wealthy landowners might have groups of plots worked as a single operational unit (which one might call a 'farm', though the Greeks generally did not) scattered throughout the territory of Attica and beyond. Such a patchwork landscape is not surprising given how intensively farmed much of classical Attica appears to have been. However, the fact remains that the critical feature is the distribution of these plots and access to them. Plainly many Athenians may have owned a little bit of land, but a few owned and/or controlled nearly half of it. How one interprets this equation, and the implications drawn from the premise, depends on how one assesses the importance of the first half of the equation in comparison with the second half.

### Landholdings on the ground

In recent years the evidence of archaeological survey has increasingly been used to address the question of access to agricultural land and other agrarian resources (e.g., presses and threshing floors). Such data are open to a range of different interpretations, depending on the point of view of the investigator. Frequently they have been used to support the idea that landholdings were relatively equally distributed in the territories of Greek poleis (e.g., Jameson et al. 1994:

385–92; Morris 1994a; Hanson 1995: 187). However, occupation, not ownership, is what the archaeological remains unambiguously record. Settlement is more definitively documented than land use or land division in most cases. Further, it is usually unclear whether all the sites within a given period (e.g., ‘classical’) were simultaneously occupied (Foxhall 2000).

So, for example, the Southern Argolid researchers assumed that the small rural sites of the ‘late classical’ period in one particular area represent wholly contemporary, discrete farms, each surrounded by its own coherent land area (Jameson et al. 1994, 388–91, Figure 6.20 and Table 6.7). Given what we know from other sources about Greek inheritance systems (in which partible inheritance was normal), the ubiquity of fragmented holdings, and the ways in which Greek farmers exploited a range of micro-environments, including areas of grazing and forest, such a picture appears quite unrealistic. Moreover, it would be highly unlikely to have remained stable over any length of time. Rather, the holdings of such ‘farmstead’ sites were small plots intermingled with each other, quite likely stretched out over some distance across the landscape.

Who exactly owned these ‘farmstead’ sites, and what class of people they represent, is also problematic. Certainly a strong case can be made for the idea that the bulk of archaeological remains discovered by archaeological survey document the relatively well-off, not the poor, who are difficult to detect (Jameson et al. 1994: 58, 61–3; Foxhall 2000).

The trajectory of documented Greek inheritance systems for the distribution of landed resources would be likely to have the greatest impact on smaller-scale landholders. In situations where there was little to divide, subdivision of land or sharing of resources might offer the only feasible means of dividing an estate fairly into equal portions. In contrast, larger scale landholders, who owned several properties in different areas might more easily and more equitably distribute these among their heirs without subdividing them. The implication for interpreting the archaeological evidence is that ‘farms’ which appear to have bounded, consolidated landholdings of a considerable size, as on Euboea (Keller and Wallace 1988), are more likely to have belonged to the wealthy. In this case, such holdings perhaps represent the fruits of imperialist exploitation by wealthy outsiders: Athenian *klerouchs* like the rich men whose confiscated Euboean property is listed on the Attic Stelae (*IG* I<sup>3</sup> 422.375–7; 424.17–21; Pritchett 1956: 271, 276 and see below).

The evidence of field boundaries and land divisions is not easy to relate directly to landholding, ownership or usufruct. Where archaeologically visible features exist, such as walls, ditches or other forms of enclosure, it is difficult to ascertain their long-term validity as property boundaries; social reality may often have changed faster than landscape features.

Greek colonial poleis are often cited as embodying and manifesting the egalitarian principles of landholding less visible in old Greece. Part of the countryside near the colony of Metapontum appears to have been divided into ‘lots’ late in the sixth century, perhaps in a ‘second wave’ of colonization (that

these divisions are 'archaic' is not so clear, since many of the excavated buildings on them are classical [J.C. Carter 1990]). What we see on the ground, however, is a measure of land not a unit of ownership. Though the documentary evidence for the establishment of colonies (much of it disturbingly secondary) is often read as implying absolute equality of land distribution (Asheri 1966; Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 123; Murray 1993: 113–15, 117, cf. 164; Jameson 1994: 59; Hanson 1995: 195–6), or at least an egalitarian ethos (Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 69), the fact that land is divided into equal-sized parcels need not have any implications for the size or scale of the distribution of land holdings to individual colonists. The stated principle is that the allocation of land be fair, but there is no implication that the 'portions' of all landowners are the same size (Burford 1993: 27). At Metapontum the land divisions on the ground are frequently sub-divided. Conversely, wealthy elite colonists may have had access to more than one 'portion', just as the 'fair' distribution of booty in war allocated a greater share to the (elite) leaders.

It is interesting to ask how wealthy colonists worked their land. The most obvious answer is that their wealth (and possibly birth and influence) gave them access to more labour, which in turn ultimately allowed them access to more land. Conversely, how could the poorest colonists, with access to less labour, work as much land and/or cultivate it as intensively as the rich? Might this not mean that in the medium to long term their land came under the control of the rich?

By the fifth and fourth centuries, when the principle of equality in all senses had become a serious political and philosophical issue, the frequency with which the principle of equal property holdings is discussed suggests that it was at least debatable and probably abnormal (Burford 1993: 27–9). Even at this time when we first have inscriptions recording colonial enterprises (Osborne 1998: 252–6), as in the fourth-century case of Kerkyra Melaina (*SIG*<sup>3</sup> 141), although the original colonists may have received equal portions of some categories of land, there is no provision for maintaining equality of landholdings over time, and later colonists get a poorer deal (Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 124–5). The decree detailing the establishment of an Athenian colony at Brea, c. 445 BCE (Meiggs and Lewis 1988: no. 49) provides for the appointment of *geonomoi* to take charge of land distribution, but there is no explicit provision that portions be equal. Demokleides, the proposer of the decree, has engineered a considerable degree of power and autonomy for himself (lines 8–9, 20–6). Phantokles' amendment on side B may be the most revealing, and most truly democratic, aspect of the inscription, limiting participation in the new settlement to thetes and zeugites. Several interpretations are possible (Davies 1981: 56; Jameson 1994: 59, n.21), but this could be an attempt to block the efforts of wealthier men to dominate in terms of both landholding and political power.

Certainly it is plain that at the height of Athens' imperial power wealthy men benefited immensely from the possession of landholdings overseas. The men whose property was confiscated in the scandals of 415/4, documented on the

so-called Attic Stelae, had considerable landholdings outside Attica. To cite a single example (for others see Davies 1981, 58–60), the Thasian property of Adeimantos son of Leukolophides of Skambonides (*IG* I<sup>3</sup> 426.44–51), specializing in wine production, was capable of storing over 5000 litres of wine (Foxhall forthcoming). This hardly sounds like a subsistence property, or one that would have been allotted to a low-status klerouch. Though, as is often alleged, empire benefited the poor in Athens in economic terms, it is likely that it benefited the rich even more.

### Landholding and the extremes of wealth and poverty

Another frequently cited indicator of the egalitarian ideals and the comparative economic equality of Greek poleis is the relatively small distance between the top and bottom of the wealth and property-holding spectrum (Davies 1981: 52; Burford 1993: 70–1; Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 126; Morris 1994a: 362 n. 53; Hanson 1995). Hanson has summarized the position most recently and most vigorously, but many would agree wholeheartedly with his explanation:

There must have been an enforced code of the Greek polis, a social ethic at work that discouraged the accumulation of property. How else can we explain why the inherited rich, the more gifted *georgoi*, the more successful in commerce and mining, all failed to accumulate vast tracts, failed to transfer their off-farm capital into landed estates – phenomena that were commonplace after the demise of the free and autonomous Greek polis?

(Hanson 1995: 188)

I would argue that an explanation lies more in the size of the overall system than any inherent qualities of egalitarianism we might wish to attribute to it. By comparison, the economic scope, the playing field on which the wealthy might acquire more wealth, was vastly larger for, e.g., the Roman empire. The Roman elite could and did acquire land and other property throughout Italy and across the empire. Archaic-classical Greek city-states were effectively closed systems: the privilege of land ownership was generally limited to citizens, and usually political barriers were erected to stop economic (or any other kind of) integration with other, similar polities. In other words, one could argue that it was the exclusivity of the polis, not its egalitarianism, which limited the acquisitiveness of the wealthy. Certainly the richest were richer in Rome than in Athens or Corinth, though whether the poorest were any poorer in Athens than in Rome is probably an unanswerable question, though I personally doubt that there was much difference. The fact remains that in periods when Athens' imperial power flourished (in tandem with radical democracy), the size of landholdings of the rich also increased substantially, in a number of documented cases by the addition of large holdings outside Attica (see above). Indeed, it may have been the case

for some rich men that their overseas possessions were much larger than their holdings within Attica (Davies 1981: 58–60). That within the territory of any given polis the rich do not generally seem to have either entirely disenfranchised or displaced the poor is, of course, significant. That it can be understood at face value as a measure of egalitarianism seems to me more dubious.

### Access to labour and access to land

How land was worked, that is, access to labour, forms another important facet of access to land in practical terms. As noted above in relation to the distribution of plots in colonies, access to equal amounts of land or even equal-quality land is meaningless in the absence of information about sources of labour. Two plots of equal size and quality might produce radically different yields under a comparatively extensive subsistence regime in comparison with an intensive regime demanding high inputs of labour. Sources of labour in the polis have long been discussed (Weber 1976: 165–85; Finley 1981f), and in the past twenty years the particular problem of agricultural labour has become a big issue (Jameson 1977, 1992 and this volume; de Ste. Croix 1981, Wood 1988, Burford 1993: 182–222, etc.). Here I propose to focus on one element of this larger debate which touches on the main theme of this chapter.

I have long been puzzled by the characterization of the economy of the Greek polis as an economy of rentiers. This premise underlies Weber's formulation of the 'consumer city', i.e. urban-based elites living off the rents from rural properties (Weber 1976: 170–84), and supplies the rationale for fitting the polis (along with other cities of antiquity) into that bit of his overall typology. This basic principle underlies much of Finley's influential formulation of 'the ancient economy', including the role of the Greek city within it (Finley 1981f, 1999a). In fact there is little genuine evidence for elite farmers living off agricultural rents, for poor tenant farmers, or indeed for anyone other than wealthy property owners either leasing or letting landed property (cf. Davies 1981: 54–5; Osborne 1988; Burford 1993: 177–81). Nor is there any solid evidence for supposing that the bulk of workers on the lands of the wealthy were tenants (contra Wood 1983, 1988; cf. Jameson this volume).

Rental is best documented for four categories of property in the polis (especially Athens): 1) corporately-owned and/or public land (these are overlapping categories), 2) in Attica, orphans' estates, 3) urban property and 4) land abroad.

- 1 Corporately-owned and/or public land is the best documented category both within and beyond Athens. Most of the evidence is epigraphical, and takes the form of leases. In Attica, such land may have constituted as much as 10 per cent of cultivated land (Andreyev 1967). The leases we have demonstrate clearly that such land was in the hands of the wealthy both in Attica and elsewhere (Osborne 1988: 303–4).

- 2 Orphans' estates are the only category of privately owned agricultural land regularly documented as rented out in classical Athens. Most of the evidence comes from forensic oratory, but some examples are documented among the *boroi* (Osborne 1988: 308–10, 313, 315). Once an estate is substantial enough to become an issue in a lawsuit, or a piece of real property is worth marking with a mortgage-stone if it has been used as security for a loan, it is likely that these are substantial assets, owned by the rich. It is unlikely that the estates of poor orphans were usually rented out in the same way, and the proportion of orphans' estates so large that they were leased was probably small (Osborne 1988: 310). Indeed, the reason the procedure was carried out at all was not so much for the investment potential, but in order to prevent (and to fend off charges of) fraudulent management.
- 3 Urban property forms a much more interesting, and possibly significant category of rental income for the wealthy. It is well documented in Athens, particularly through forensic oratory (Davies 1981: 49–52; Osborne 1988: 313–19), but must have been a feature of other major port and commercial cities as well. Given that the ownership of real property was restricted to citizens, there must have been substantial opportunities for generating income via the rental of urban properties of all kinds for a wide range of purposes to metics and other non-citizens. I know of no study which focuses specifically on this topic (Davies notes its significance only in passing) which would seem to merit further detailed investigation.
- 4 The leasing of land abroad owned by the rich is a significant category in the case of imperial Athens (Davies 1981: 55–60), as noted above. Lower-status *klerouchs* were apparently more inclined to farm the plots assigned to them rather than to operate as absentee landlords (Burford 1993: 54).

What I hope this section serves to demonstrate is that the characterization of large landowners in archaic-classical Greek poleis as rentiers is misleading, and may skew our whole view of the economy. Despite, perhaps even as a result of, the debates of the past twenty years, it is clear that the main sources of labour for the 'poor' are fundamentally different from those of the rich, and that this difference has a direct impact on how agricultural and other land was exploited. The lands of the rich were worked largely by dependants. What sort of dependants varied: in Attica it was largely chattel slaves, while dependent classes such as *penestai* or helots were significant sources of labour in other parts of the Greek world. In contrast, the 'poor', that is anyone outside the category of the rich, largely worked their own land. This contrast would have been perennially manifest as a social expression of clear economic difference among the citizen body which would have been hard to blur. The fact that the rich sometimes supplemented their slave labour forces with other workers, or that a 'poor' man might work alongside a slave or two would not have eradicated the glaring distinction between those property owners who engaged in manual

work and those who did not. Nor would it have systematically allowed the poor the dubious privilege of access to the lands of the wealthy via tenancy.

### Landholding, citizenship and equality

I have never been able to resolve in my own mind the paradox of substantial inequalities in landholding juxtaposed to the notion of political equality in poleis where landholding and citizenship were linked in several ways. Some (Finley 1981e; Hanson 1995) have emphasized the overlap between politically active citizens and the land-owning group, ultimately defining the citizen body itself as a kind of elite. Ober (1989: 194), on the other hand, maintains that a unique feature of classical Athenian democracy was that property ownership was detached from political participation. In this section I will try to spread out the web of relationships between land ownership and political action.

Firstly and self-evidently, in Greek poleis from as early as we can identify 'citizens', these are the people with the exclusive right to own land. In this sense, even Athens never separated land ownership from citizenship. Conversely, it was the case in many (I would guess in most) poleis that participation as a politically active citizen meant being a landowner (Mossé 1993: 33). Almost everywhere there appear to have been property qualifications for office-holding (as there had been in Athens at least into the fifth century), including participation in the political process above the level of sitting in the assembly (O'Neil 1995: 32–47). Normally Greeks appear to have assumed that office holding was profitable (Lys. 19.48; Ober 1989: 236–8, 246).

Under the radical democracy of fifth and fourth century Athens, wealth and property ownership clearly were separated from involvement in civic and legal processes, as well as from most offices and magistracies, indeed the costs of 'poor' citizens' participation were borne by the state. But, this is exactly the celebratory rhetoric of democracy which it might be naïve to take at face value. Despite the rhetoric, those serving in powerful military positions or high-status religious offices (Humphreys 1980: 120–1) normally owned land, usually on a substantial scale. This appears to have been important in symbolic terms (Deinarchos 1.71; cf. Burford 1993: 34), representing 'shareholding' in the state, as well as in practical economic terms, not least since generals and other officers might sometimes expect to underwrite the costs of campaigns (Davies 1981: 128–30), as well as to profit from any booty. Indeed, such offices tended to run in propertied families (Davies 1981: 122–4; Hignett 1952: 249, 252), though Davies convincingly shows that during the later fifth and fourth centuries a volatile 'political class' (orators, politicians, etc.) became increasingly separated from the holders of high military office, who mostly came from a relatively few, rather more stable, propertied families (Davies 1981: 120–31).

Davies' explanation that political life was effectively taken over by a 'democratic power base' founded on rhetorical skill (1981: 126–7) is surely correct as far as it goes. What he does not sufficiently explain is why such



propertied families maintained *any* kind of important power base, why it was linked to both the concept and the reality of land ownership, and indeed, why such families appear to prosper in this peculiarly archaic-sounding niche under radical democracy. To me this phenomenon suggests that even radical democracy could not obliterate the deep structures of class-based hierarchies of power, grounded in access to land. Perhaps the repeated calls for the redistribution of land (Burford 1993: 28–9) which never seemed to materialize in the long term, were an almost sub-conscious recognition of them.

The democratic answer was that the richest in fourth-century Athens paid public costs through liturgies and taxation. Ober (1989: 199–202) enthusiastically calls these institutions

instruments of economic redistribution, since both took money from the richer citizens and gave it (indirectly) to the poorer. . . . The redistributive function of taxation was well understood in fourth-century Athens.

(Ober 1989: 200)

However, the *eisphora* was not a graduated income tax, nor did a *choregia* support universal education. Liturgies and taxes served as much to define and highlight the special position of the very richest as to force them to contribute to the support of the state. Liturgies in particular financed the navy and state festivals, both of which were arenas where the rich could generate social and political capital (Gabrielsen 1994: 48–50), and activities which appealed to traditional aristocratic values, even if they were now dressed in democratic clothes (cf. von Reden, this volume). They did not necessarily pay for the public services we would expect in a modern democracy, nor did they benefit the very poor in practical terms very much at all.

Moreover, like the military offices discussed above, the trierarchy during the fourth century was largely inherited (Gabrielsen 1994: 60–7), like the land which supported it. Plainly liturgical and other euergetic spending was a two edged-sword, cutting both ways for the rich. Both Gabrielsen (1994: 43–67) and Ober (1989: 192–247) have sensitively teased out the nuances. Nonetheless, as in the case of ‘military families’, these institutions underpin traditional hierarchies based for the most part on landed wealth and upper-class birth: they do very little to undermine them.

## Conclusions

In the closed system of the Greek polis, access to one major resource, land, was critical for most people, yet limited to relatively few. As an irredentist substantivist I am comfortable with the notion that land functioned as an economic resource in Greek poleis embedded in their political systems. Indeed, in what complex society are the economic roles and functions of land not



embedded in the political system? I am less happy with the idea that we can see the consumer city or an elite of rentiers in the channels of access to, and the exploitation of, land in Greek city-states.

Because of the way in which land passed from one generation to another via inheritance, in most cases carrying political enfranchisement with it, its political symbolic value was as important as its practical value as the means of primary production. The way in which the control of large amounts of land and the labour to work it validated high status manifests a deep structure of Greek society which not even the power of radical democracy was able to overcome, though it succeeded in ring-fencing it to some extent.

If politics and economics are so entangled, then the paradox of political egalitarianism juxtaposed with economic inequality cannot be resolved. Perhaps the notion of equality in Greek democracy functions more as a negative ideal than as a positive one? It is easy for us to mistake it for a kind of Jeffersonian notion of the virtue of the common man but for the Greeks it might have served more as a means of mystifying real differences in life chances.

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# INDEX OF ANCIENT AUTHORS

Compiled by Helen Forbes

References to ancient works are in parentheses; page numbers of this volume are outside parentheses. Abbreviations are as used in the S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (eds, 1996) *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Aesch. *Pers.* (238), 56  
 Aeschin. (3.220–1), 85; (1.97), 88; 95;  
 96; (1.98), 90; (1.94), 93; (1.102), 94;  
 (3.162), 95; (3.158), 95; (3.246), 95;  
 (1.126), 97; (1.97), 103; (1.99), 105;  
 (1.124), 105; (1.170), 105; (1.154;  
 1.101), 111n45; (1.18), 112n53  
 Aeschines Socraticus (39), 89  
 Alexis (Fr. 115 K-A [= Athen. 3.107a]),  
 68; (Fr. 153.6–14 [= Athen.  
 9.379a]), 68; (Fr. 20.4–5 K-A), 91;  
 (76 K-A, Fr. 159 K-A), 91; (103  
 K-A), 91; (Fr. 281 K-A), 91; (Fr. 284  
 K-A), 91; (Fr. 255 K-A), 91; (Fr. 43),  
 91; (Fr. 140.13–16), 91; (Fr. 57 K-A;  
 Fr. 130 K-A; Fr. 131 K-A; Fr. 204),  
 92; (Fr. 3 K-A), 92; (Fr. 36 K-A), 93;  
 (Fr. 172 K-A), 94; (Fr. 140.13–16  
 K-A; Fr. 153.6–14 K-A), 94;  
 (Fr. 115, Fr. 116, Fr. 117, Fr. 119),  
 95; (Fr. 329), 95  
 Amphis (Fr. 3 K-A), 88  
 Anaxandrides (Fr. 34.12–15 K-A), 91;  
 (Fr. 41 K-A), 94; (Fr. 14; Fr.  
 31.1–2), 97  
 Anaxippus (Fr. 6 K-A), 92  
 Andoc. (1.133–5), 79; (Schol. Ar. *Vesp.*  
 1007), 93; (1.38), 105; 110n30;  
 (1.42, 87–8), 139n16  
 Antiph. (6.39), 139n16; (6.38–9),  
 139n22  
 Antiphanes (Fr. 26 K-A), 88; (Fr. 49  
 K-A), 89; (Fr. 50 K-A), 89; (Fr. 224  
 K-A), 89; (Fr. 233.1–3), 89;  
 (Fr. 166.1–3, Fr. 149), 90; (Fr. 121),  
 91; (188.16–17 K-A), 91; (Fr. 2), 91;  
 (210), 91; (Fr. 69.6–9), 92; (Fr. 159  
 K-A), 92; (Fr. 164 K-A), 92;  
 (Fr. 204.5–8), 92; (Fr. 247), 92;  
 (Fr. 157.6), 93; (Fr. 123.4–6), 93;  
 (Fr. 37), 94; (Fr. 166.3–8), 94;  
 (Fr. 293), 95; (Fr. 98; Fr. 142–3), 97;  
 (Fr. 210 K.A.), 112n54  
 App. *B Civ.* (1.96), 127  
 Apul. *Flor.* (9.26), 118  
 Ar. (Fr. 850 K-A), 93; *Arch.* (874–6), 77;  
 (878–80), 77; (889–90), 77; (760–1),  
 78; (33–6), 78; (551), 89; (1090–1),  
 95; (32–6), 108n9; *Av.* (491), 88, 89;  
 (490), 89; (554), 92; (490), 92;  
 (1134), 93; (442), 93; (1637), 93;  
 (1152), 93; (711), 94; (1093), 94;  
 (1134), 95; (490), 96; (1154), 97;  
*Ecl.* (737), 92; (431–3), 96; *Eq.*  
 (644–5), 76; (647–50), 76; (894–5),  
 76; (43), 86n11; (143), 88; (44, 136,  
 139), 89; (739), 93; (739), 94; (132,  
 138), 95; (129), 96; (854), 97;  
 (92–4), 136; (181), 138n6; *Lys.*  
 (735), 88; (408), 90; (23.6–8), 97;  
*Nub.* (767), 95; (510), 112n56; *Pax*  
 (1198–1202), 76; (1212–13), 76;

- (1224–39), 76; (190), 88; (952), 89;  
(270, 648), 89; (447, 1213, 1261–4),  
90; (1197–206), 90; (296), 90; (296,  
511, 603), 91; (1208–60), 92;  
(1255–9), 93; (545), 93; (690), 93;  
(849), 95; (296), 97; *Pl.* (435–5,  
1120–2), 92; (163), 97; (*passim*),  
108n9; *Plut.* (175), 89; (167), 89, 93;  
(163, 513), 89; (904, 1178–84), 90;  
(223, 903), 91; (166), 91; (337–41),  
93; (426–8), 93; (513), 94, 95;  
(426–8), 94; (514), 95, 96; (166,  
514), 95; (160–2, 514), 96; (513),  
97; (229ff), 134; *Ran.* (858), 89;  
(183–41), 94; (114), 94; (1368–9),  
97; (372–80), 112n56; *Thesm.*  
(347–50), 92; (839–45), 111n37;  
(415–20), 111n46; *Vesp.* (98), 66n18;  
(238), 89; (712), 90; (1184), 92;  
(1007), 93
- Arist. *Ath. Pol.* (7.3), 33; (2.2), 33, 39;  
(2.3) 38; (1), 37; (5.2), 40; (3.5), 41;  
(7.1–2), 41; (7.3–8.5), 41; (9), 41;  
(11.1), 41; (7.3), 42n5; (51.3), 69;  
(62.3), 85; (43.3), 88n25; (51.3), 89;  
(50.2), 92; (51.3), 94; (502), 95;  
(14.4), 96; (49.4), 109n14; (2.2),  
143; *Eth. Nic.* (1121b34), 97; (5, 5,  
1133a), 134; (1131a2–9), 150;  
(1132b16–20), 150; (1132b31–5),  
150; (1133a8–10), 150;  
(1133a16–24), 150; (1133a33–5),  
150; (1131a21–3), 150;  
(1133a20–2), 151; *Mag. Mor.* (2.7.26  
[1206a27]), 90, 93, 94, 96; (1.34),  
91; (1.33.14, 17), 173n5; *Pol.* (1274  
a 19–21), 33; (1275 b 37), 40;  
(1.3.1256a6), 92; (1258b1), 101;  
(1258a19–b8; 1265b10–22), 101;  
(1258b1–4), 101; (1291b14–30),  
101; (1289b24–36), 102;  
(1316b3–5), 102; (1264b4–6), 106;  
(1256b40–1), 108n10; (1257b1–5),  
108n11; (1337b18–22), 108n12;  
(1258b25–7, 33–9; 1260a41–b2;  
1277.36–7; 1277b33–1278a13;  
1277a32–b7; 1341b8–18), 109n12;  
(1252), 110n36; (1291a33–4),  
111n41; (1257a–b), 134; (1330a26,  
1253b34–1254a1), 140;  
(1254a15–17), 141; (1255b28–9),  
141; (1254b–1255a), 141;  
(1255b3–4), 141; (1254a9–13), 141;  
(1255b11–14), 141; (1255a31–2),  
143; (1337b1–21, 1260b1–2), 144;  
(1254b28–31), 144; (1337b4–22),  
145; (1256b23–6), 145;  
(1259a6–37), 149–50; (1258b2–4),  
151; (1257a6–9), 151; (1257b15),  
151; (1259a2–3), 153; (1260a9–10),  
153; (1317a16 ff., 1321a5–6), 154;  
(1318b17–18), 167; (1318b), 169;  
(1330a), 174n19; (1323a5–6), 180;  
(1330a), 190; *Pr.* (936b.26), 89; *Rh.*  
(1367a33), 101; (1367a30–2), 101;  
(1381a21–4), 101
- [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* (50.2), 95; *Oec.*  
(1343a25–b2), 101; (A.3.1), 108n3;  
(A.5.1), 108n8; (1347a15–18), 148;  
(1348a29–34), 148; (1349a33–6,  
1350a24–30), 148; (1353b20–6),  
148; (1.6.8), 171; (1.5.3–6), 172;  
(1.5.2), 172; (1.6.1), 173
- Ath. (9.397), 66n18; (14.61a), 89;  
(8.343d), 89; (4.172), 89; (3.108e),  
90; (13.562d), 91; (7.302f), 91;  
(6.227b), 91; (8.342e), 91; (13.568a),  
91; (567d), 91; (13.572a), 91;  
(3.125b), 91; (4.164a–d), 91;  
(3.104cd), 92; (6.226a), 92; (6.226b),  
92; (6.225f), 92; (8.358d), 92;  
(6.225d), 92; (6.224c), 92; (7.309d),  
92; (8.334c), 92; (4.169b), 92;  
(6.226), 93; (7.287d), 93; (15.690a),  
94; (10.441d), 94; (9.379a), 94;  
(3.107a, 6.254a, 8.340a, 678c), 95;  
(6.227b), 97; (6.258cd), 97;  
(512b4–6), 102; (272c), 112n55;  
(12, 526 d–f), 133; (265 b–c), 146;  
(6.262–73), 165n22; (6.262b, d),  
165n22; *Epir.* (1.27d), 89; (2.44a),  
95; *Epist.* I. (25f), 91
- Cic. *Att.* (IV.3.4; 17.4), 116; (1.13.6),  
118; (1.14.7), 124; (1.12.1), 126,  
129n4; (7.18.4), 127; *Fam.* (5.5),

- 124; *Leg. agr.* (2.89), 116; *Q Fr.* (3.1.3), 118; *Rab. Post.* (11.30), 118
- Columella *Rust.* (1.8.6; 11.1.23), 116;  
1 Praef. (18), 116
- Cratinus. (Fr. 48 (Kock)), 90
- Critias (Fr. 70d), 95
- Dem. (24.212–14), 54–5; (41.11), 59;  
(49.50–2), 59; (53.2), 59; (35.10),  
65n15; (50.18, 56), 65n16; (27.9),  
71; (18.169), 75; (50.6), 75; (56.9),  
75; (42.20, 31), 75–6; (25.52), 78;  
(10.38), 79–80; (37.4), 80; (37.31,  
50), 81; (40.52), 81; (27.9–11), 81;  
(45.31–2), 83; (48.14–17), 83;  
(36.11), 84; (36.11), 89; (21.13–14,  
17, 156), 89; (21.16), 90; (21.17),  
90; (25.47), 90; (8.25; 23.146; 32.1;  
33.1–2; 35.49; 50.6; 52.3;  
58.10–11), 90; (57.45), 90; (54.7),  
91; (19.281), 91; (44.4; 51.22), 92;  
(27.9), 92; (25.52), 93, 97; (47.65),  
93; (27.9), 93; (47.71), 93; (45.33,  
53.14), 94; (25.52; 34.13), 94;  
(18.194; 24.138; 32.1, 2, 8; 33.1, 2;  
34.6, 9, 32, 33, 51; 35.36, 52, 53;  
49.14, 15, 29, 40, 48; 50.6, 17;  
56.10, 49; 58.10, 12), 94; (42.7), 94;  
(48.12–14), 95; (47.52), 95; (59.30),  
95; (48.12–13), 95; (47.55, 72, 81),  
97; (21.215; 45.63; 36 passim), 97;  
(18.129), 97; (57.45), 97;  
(48.14–15), 102; (36.43, 46, 48),  
103, 109n21; (34.5–10), 103; (34.6),  
103; (34.23, 31), 103; (34.18–19),  
103; (32.4), 103; (32), 103; (34.37),  
103; (25), 103; (37), 105; (36.28–9),  
105; (36.30), 105; (27), 105; (59.22),  
105; (36.14), 105; (36.18), 105;  
(33.7), 109n19; (45.64), 109n19;  
(36.14), 109n21; (36.4, 11, 37;  
45.31–2), 109n24; (49.31), 110n25;  
(23), 110n26; (32.9), 110n27;  
(53.21; 27.20–1; 28.12), 110n30;  
(53.21), 110n30; (36.14), 110n37;  
(27.53, 55; 28.47–8; 41), 111n37;  
(45.28; 36.8), 111n38; (39.6, 35),  
111n40; (21.151, 153, 208),  
111n41; (46.14; 20.102; 44.49;  
44.67), 111n43; (27.5), 111n44;  
(27.9, 45.71), 112n47; (49.22; 52.8;  
52.14), 112n48; (36.4–6, 36.57;  
45.72), 112n49; (59.45–6), 112n54;  
(35.10), 131; (21.94), 136; (21.94;  
27.1; 29.58; 30.1; 33.14–15, 30, 32;  
34.18, 31; 36.15; 38.6; 40.39; 41.14,  
28; 42.19; 52.14, 30; 56.17–18;  
59.45, 68–9), 139n16; (33.20),  
139n19; (59.45ff, 68ff), 139n20;  
(30.2; 41.14), 139n22; (42.20), 144;  
(27.24–5), 166n34; *Lept.* (20.9),  
138n5; *Meid.* (21.94), 139n14  
[Dem.] 49 passim; (17.15), 143; (43),  
200; (43.19), 200; (43.42–3), 202;  
(43.24, 44), 202; (43.73), 202;  
(43.13), 202; (43.74), 202; (43.37,  
45), 203; (36.36), 203; (43.77), 203;  
(43.14), 203; (43.78), 203; (43.79),  
203; (43.22, 24, 48), 204; (43.31),  
205; (43.7ff, 29, 38), 205; (43.7),  
206; (42), 206; (43.69), 206;  
(43.69–70), 207; (43.71), 207;  
(43.4), 207
- Din. (1.23), 94; (Fr. 16.4), 95; (1.43),  
97; (1.71), 218
- Diod. Sic. (14.81.6), 57
- Diog. Laert. (1.2.2), 38; (2.1.25), 96
- Dion. Hal. *Isae.* (4), 206; *Isoc.* (1), 89;  
*Lys.* (34), 173n13
- Epictetus (4.1.37), 155n4
- Eubulus (133), 91
- Eur. *El.* (252), 89; (252), 96; *Med.*  
(613–14), 65n16; *Mel. Des.* (Fr. 660  
Mette 1982, lines 9–11), (Fr. 13  
Auffret 1987) 112n52; *Or.* (917–22),  
108n9; *Supp.* (881–7), 108n9; *Rhes.*  
74–5, 176
- Festus *de Verb. Sign.* (176), 116
- FGrH* (IIB, 115, 62), 133
- Gell. *NA* (12.12), 123
- Harp. (s.v. *notheia*), 111n44

- Hdt. (4.152), 32; (5.71), 37; (1.29), 41; (1.68), 80; (2.47, 48), 96; (1.29.5), 107; (6.130), 112n59; (4.152), 149; (4.196), 149; (1.153), 149
- Hermippos (Fr. 63 K-A), 78–9
- Herod. (1.25.3, 7), 95
- Hes. *Op.* (109–20), 20; (42–6), 19; (618–94), 32; (628–9, 646–7), 32; (116–18, 173), 78; (225–37), 87n14; (405–9, 602–3, 695–705), 153
- Hippoc. *Ep.* (16), 95
- Hom. *Od.* (9.391–2), 80; (4.640, 14.420), 96; *Il.* (6.234–6), 149
- Hyp. (Fr. 125), 97; (6.19), 101; (5.3, 26, 36), 107; (5.2, 3, 5, 18), 107; (5.29), 107; (5.7, 14, 19), 110n29; (6.19), 112n56; (5.31), 112n57; *Against Athenogenes* (18), 81; (21–22), 87n20; (3), 95; (5), 103; (5), 107, 112n58; (4.14), 138n5
- Isae. (6.33), 88; (9.28), 90; (5.44), 93; (7.32, 42), 104; (8.35), 110n30; (Fr. 8, 6.25), 111n40; (3.1, 6, 9, 29), 111n43; (3.45–51), 111n44; (2.30; 5.31), 139n16; (2.29–33), 139n22; (11), 200; (11.8), 203; (11.41), 203; (11.49), 203; (11.10, 37, 40–1), 204; (11.10), 204; (11.47–50), 205; (11.49), 205; (11.47), 205; (11.48–9), 205; (11.47, 49), 205; (11.44), 205; (11.8), 205; (11.15f., 20–2, 24f), 205; (11.41–2), 205; (11.24f, 32f), 206; (11.44), 206; (11.22, 24, 30), 206; (11.47), 206; (11.48), 206; (11.43), 206; (11.42–3), 207; (11.40–4), 207; (11.42), 207; (11.39), 207; (11.8–9), 207n3
- Isoc. (14.48), 101; (17.11–12), 102; (17.31–2; 17.43), 109n19; (17; 17.33; 17.41), 109n23; (8.128), 111n41; (17.2), 112n49; (8.21), 112n55; (15.27), 139; (15.17, 27; 17.19–20, 52; 18.10), 139n16; (17.19), 139n21; (15.27), 139n22; (8.128), 147; (8.125), 148; (8.125, 134), 152
- Livy (34.27.9), 196
- Lucian *Apologia* (10), 100
- Lycurg. (1.104), 112n56; *Leoc.* (58), 89; (55), 90; (108), 101
- Lys. (19), 56; (19.18), 57; (19.59), 57; (19.23), 58; (19.24–6), 58; (19.25), 60; (19.26), 60; (Fr. 57) 60; (19.11), 61; (19.18), 61; (19.55), 61; (19.62–3), 61–2; (19.45–9), 62–3; (19.25 f), 66n16; (34), 70; (24.20), 78; (21.1–6), 85; (23.6), 86n11; (Fr. 88 Sauppe), 88; (3.15–16, 23.2), 91; (23.3), 93; (21.10), 93; (Fr. 89 Sauppe), 93; (24.6), 102; (32), 107; (24), 109n14; (1, 32), 110n36; (19.37), 111n40; (27.9–10), 111n41; (19.39), 111n44; (8.12; 32.2; Fr. 37.1), 139n16; (32.2; 37.1), 139n22; (12.19), 166n34; (Fr. 164 Sauppe), 205; (19.48), 218
- Macrobian. *Sat.* (1.16.34; 16.28–36), 116
- Men. (Fr. 338 [Körte/Thierfelder 1953]), 108n9; *Aspis*. (339–42), 92; (232–3), 97; *Dys.* (729–39), 111n44; (414–17), 174n19; (330–1), 183n4; *Epit.* (257–9, 465, 408), 89; (242–3, 255–6 Sandbach), 95; (136, Sandbach), 95; (476–7), 95; (378–80), 102; *Georgos* (46, 57), 108n8; (p. 157, 46–56 ed. Koerte), 183n4; *Plokion* (Fr. 333–4 Koerte, 402–3 Kock), 106; *Pk.* (284, 290 Sandbach), 97; (497), 112n54; *Sam.* 510; (289–90), 97; (234–6), 111n46
- Paus. (4.14.5), 189; (1.29.1), 204
- Pherecr. (Fr. 234 K-A), 90
- Pherekrates (Fr. 142 K-A), 108n7
- Philostr. *V A* (4, 32), 138n10
- Philyllius (Fr. 1 (K-A)), 89
- Pl. (passim), 92; *Alc.* (107e), 94; (2.149e), 97; *Ap.* (25b), 91; *Chrm.* (158a), 60, 65n12, 66n18; (*passim*), 66n21; *Cra.* (390b), 93; *Cri.* (45b–c),

- 65n16; *Criti.* (70d), 96; (113d), 97;  
*Grg.* (518b), 89; (452a), 90; (490e),  
 91; (449d), 92; (512b), 93; (517e),  
 94; (517e), 96; (490e, 491a), 96;  
 (448c, 453c), 97; *Euthydemus*  
 (289b–d), 93; *Ion* (536a), 91; *Leg.*  
 (639a), 88; (858b), 93; (918b), 94;  
 (4, 705a; 12, 949d, 950a), 133;  
 (920d), 137; (920d), 139n15; (956b),  
 139n16; (777b–d), 190; *Meno* (86e),  
 90; *Minos* (318), 89; (316e), 92;  
 (317), 94; (889d), 108n9; *Phd.*  
 (87b–c), 92; *Phdr.* (257c), 93; *Plt.*  
 (289e), 89; (289e), 101; *Prt.* (319d),  
 70; (347c), 101; (311c), 88; (323a;  
 327a–c), 89; (319e; 324d; 327e;  
 357e), 90; (312b), 91; (326a), 92;  
 (344d), 93; (319b), 94; (326b), 94;  
 (3475), 95; (219d, 323c), 96; (325c),  
 97; *Resp.* (370a–c), 71; (369–71), 72;  
 (371b), 72; (371b–e), 72; (322b–c),  
 73; (370e–371b), 77; (429d), 89;  
 (330b), 90; (373b), 90; (373c), 92,  
 93, 94, 96, 97; (421a), 94; (371c),  
 101; (451d ff), 106; *Symp.* (191a), 96;  
*Ti.* (74c), 92; (343a), 95; *Theages*  
 (125c), 93; (124b), 95; (124b), 97;  
*Tht.* (149a), 93; (147a), 95; (174d),  
 95  
 Plin. *Ep.* (5.4, 13), 116  
 Plin. *HN* (8.208), 116; (28.28), 116;  
 (14.10), 184n21  
 Plut. *Alc.* (II 140b), 89; *Dem.* (4.6), 89;  
*Mor.* (842f), 87n17; *Per.* (12), 71;  
 (12.6), 97; (12.6), 97; (12), 152; *Sol.*  
 (18.1–2), 33; (12) 37; (14.3), 40;  
 (12), 89  
 Poll. (9.47–48), 75; (10.18–19), 75;  
 (10.19), 75; (7.179), 90; (7.183), 92;  
 (7.72), 93; (7.157), 93; (7.156), 93;  
 (7.34), 95; (7.196), 95; (7.191), 97;  
 (10.59), 97; (8.144), 111n42; (7.170;  
 7.155; 7.159; 4.7, 22), 112n47;  
 (9.34), 138n8; (3.83), 185  
 Schol. Ar. *Av.* (1655–6), 111n44  
 Sen. *Ep.* (86.12), 116  
 Serv. *Georg.* (1.275), 116  
 Solon (Fr. 37), 31; (Fr. 4.5–11, 6.3–4,  
 13.7–10, 71–7), 32; (Fr. 36.8–15),  
 39; (Fr. 36.4–7), 40; (Fr. 34.8–9), 40;  
 (24 [Diehl]), 143  
 Soph. *OC* (1632), 134; *Phil.* (813), 134  
 Stob. (3.1.9), 77; (4.17.17), 90;  
 (4.18.13), 91; (4.239), 92; (4.35.28),  
 97; *Flor.* (44.22), 131; (62.35),  
 183n9; (62.7), 183n9  
 Strabo (8.5.4), 144; (8.5.4), 196  
 Suda (s.v. *epikleros*), 11n44  
 Suet. *Aug.* (92.2), 116; *Claud.* (12.2),  
 116; *Ner.* (32.4), 117  
 Teles (Fr. 4.b), 110n30  
 Theophr. *Caus. pl.* (4.14.11), 94; *Char.*  
 (4.12), 76; (8.4; 11; 11.7), 89; (9.8),  
 89; (7.5), 90; (8.4), 90; (10.14, 18.6),  
 91; (6.9), 92; 96; (11.4), 92; (6.5), 92,  
 94; (11.8), 93; (9.4), 93, (17.8), 93;  
 (11.8), 94; (30.5), 94; (6.5; 20.10),  
 95; (21.12), 97; (30.15), 110n30;  
 (30.17), 110n30; (12.12), 172; *Hist.*  
*pl.* (7.2.5), 92; (4.2.6), 94; (9.1.7;  
 9.8.1), 95; (1.8.6), 208n9; *Peri*  
*symbolaion* (97), 131  
 Theopomp. (Fr. 77 (Kock)), 89; (Fr. 2  
 (Kock)), 95; (Fr. 13), 198  
 Thuc. (1.22.4), 6; (1.126), 37; (6.22),  
 69; (2.38), 77; (2.40.2), 85; (6.44.1;  
 7.43), 93; (5.82.6), 93; (6.22; 44.1;  
 2.78), 96; (5.82.6; 6.44.1), 97;  
 (2.40.4, 5), 134; (6.62.2–4), 145;  
 (7.27–8), 161; (2.13.6), 171;  
 (8.40.2), 173n5; (7.27.5), 173n17;  
 (4.3.3), 190; (5.34), 196  
 Tyrtaeus in Paus. (4.14.5), 189  
 Val. Max. (7.8.5), 126; (4.8.3), 126  
 Varro *Rust.* (III.2.7; 2.9; 2.15; 17.2–3),  
 126; (1.17.2), 184n21; (1.16.4),  
 184n21; Prooem. (1), 116  
 VT *Si.* (7.20), 183n4  
 Xen. *An.* (1.7.18, 5.6), 65n14; *Ath. Pol.*  
 (2.7), 77; (2.14), 91; (1.2, 20), 93;  
 (1.2), 94; (1.11), 103; (1.1), 109n13;  
 (1.10–11), 110n30; (1.17), 110n30;

(1.13), 111n41; (1.11), 144; (1.13), 147; *Cyr.* (6.1.22), 93; (7.5.73), 145; (1.15–8), 152; (1.18), 152; *Eq.* (2.2, 3), 95; *Oec.* (8.22), 75; (6.13), 89; (11), 84; (2), 85; (12–13), 88n23; (12.3), 90; (16.7), 91; (21.3), 92; (17.7), 92; (13.7), 95; (12.3), 95; (9.11), 96; (12.3), 101; (7.35–43, 9.14–17), 106; (7.23–5, 30), 108n2; (5.1), 108n9; (1.5, 6.4), 110n36; (9), 111n46; (1.1), 112n47; (9.15), 112n51; (11.3), 140; (4.2), 144; (20.22–6), 151; (12.6–7), 172; (13.6–9), 172; *Hell.* (4.8.24), 57; (5.1, 8.9), 92; (4.4.18), 93; (2.4.27), 93; (6.2.23), 101; (3.3.6), 198; *Mem.* (3.7), 66n21; (3.7.6), 70; (3.4), 85; (2.7.6), 89; (4.2.1, 8), 91; (3.10.9), 97; (2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6), 101; (3.11), 112n54; (3.11), 160; *Poroi* (1–5), 56; (4.5), 76; (2.1–7), 112n55; (3.4–5), 148; (3.7.6), 148–9; (4.17), 151; (4.13–32), 164; (4.14–15), 166n35; *Symp.* (4.27), 91; (2.4), 94; (4.14–15, 19, 23), 110n30; *Vect.* (5.3), 91

## Inscriptions

*Agora* XV 13, lines 85–6

*Hesp.* (67 [1998] p.216), 89; (46 [1977] p.168, no. 3.13–15), 90

*IG* I<sup>3</sup> (474–9), 71; (32.22–8, 33–8; 50.5–6; 52B.9; 79.14–17), 89; (546), 89; (1032.162–3), 89; (257.5–11), 89; (422.198–9), 89; (422.77–8, 444.274, 476.54–9), 90; (476.26, 46–54, 270–80), 90; (554; 905), 91; (1341bis), 91; (841), 91; (475.267–8), 91; (476.61–2, 268–9), 91; (374.248–56), 92; (620; 628), 92; (666; 754), 92; (1032.156), 93; (130.3–5), 94; (117.4–7, 14–16; 236.9; 1032.164–5), 94; (426.13), 94; (422.74–6, 206–7), 94; (794), 95; (475.54–65), 95; (646), 96;

(426.12, 24ff), 96; (476.104–24), 97; (475.259–60), 97; (475.240–4), 97; (426.10–39; 421–30), 110n28; (363), 202; (1288), 204; (422.375–7; 424.17–21), 213; (426.44–51), 215

*IG* I<sup>2</sup> (12373), 95

*IG* II<sup>2</sup> (1611.9), 86 n3; (1613.302), 86n3; (360.54–6, 408.13–14), 76; (10B.9), 88; (1576.69–72), 88; (1556.27–9), 88; (1557.43–6, 92; 13179), 88; 1554.28–31), 88; (244.6), 89; (1013.30), 89; (11681), 89; (1556.30–2), 89; (10B.3), 89, 97; (1566.15–17), 89; (8883), 89; (1575.5–6), 89; (1558.55–7, 1559.22–5), 90; (1495.11–19, 1635.36–7) 90; (1559.26–31, 79–82), 90; (13178), 90; (10B.8), 90; (416.4–15; 1557.59–62; 1558.90–1; 1559.36–9; 1556.2; 1577.3), 90; (1568.7–8), 90; (10B.1, 2, 5, 9, 11; 1553.24–6; 1554.18–21; 1556.36–8; 1557.99–100; 1558.63–5; 1566.39–41; 1570.69–70), 90–1; (10B.4), 91; (7967), 91; (1556.14–17), 91; (12073), 91; (11254), 91; (1561.31–4), 91; (1559.47–50, 1576.36–9), 91; (1570.87–9; 1576.13–14), 92; (1553.16–18, 26–8; 1554.22–5; 1557.47–50, 51–4; 1566.12–14), 92; (10B.10), 92; (10B.6), 92; (1557.64–7), 92; (1559.32–5), 92; (1558.10–13), 92; (1559.78), 93; (13181), 93; (1558.37–43; 1559.70–3; 1576.15–20), 93; (10B.2; 1555.21–2; 1570.36–8, 92–4), 93; (1570.72–5), 93; (10051), 93; (10B.8; 1557.23–8; 1561.18–21; 1672.28), 93; (10995), 94; (416.4–15), 94; (1558.14–17), 94; (10B.5), 94; (10B.7), 94; (1558.20–3; 1559.96–7), 94; (10B.4; 1558.33–6, 47–8), 94; (1558.66–7), 94; (11689), 95; (1566.24–6, 1570.71–2), 95; (1672.28), 95; (1672.291), 95; (1554.40–3;

# INDEX OF ANCIENT AUTHORS

1561.22–5), 95; (1558.22–5), 95;  
 (11202), 96; (1672.13, 171), 96;  
 (1556.33–5), 96; (1554.36–9;  
 1556.39–41; 1557.80–3;  
 1559.55–8; 1566.33–5;  
 1568.21–31; 1576.8–11; 1577.4;  
 1578.5–6), 96; (1570.24–6), 96;  
 (1553.35–7; 1554.32–5, 48–51,  
 71–3; 1555.14–20; 1556.18–21;  
 1557.55–58, 76–9, 84–5, 95–6,  
 97–8, 102–3; 1558.1–4, 29–32,  
 53–4, 58–62, 68–70, 87–9;  
 1559.40–3, 74–6, 86–9, 93–5,  
 98–9; 1560.16–20; 21–5; 1567.7–8;  
 1570.15–17, 39–41, 48–50,  
 51–3, 66–8, 95–7; 1576.32–5,  
 61–2; 1577.2), 96; (1557.68–71),  
 96; (1261.3), 97; (1559.59–62;  
 10843; 11647; 12387; 12559),  
 97; (1558.68–70), 97; (12563),  
 97; (1576.73–5; 1656.4–6), 97;  
 (1492.137; 1388.61–2), 101  
*IG* III(3) (68a.7–8), 89; (69.4), 90;  
 (33.4, 34.2–3), 90; (34), 91; (45a, b),

91; (87a7), 92; (69.2), 93;  
 (100.11–13), 94; (68a.1–2), 94;  
 (87.5), 96; (12), 96; (55a.1–4), 96  
*IG* II–III (244.26), 111n42  
*Inscr. Ital.* (XIII.2, no. 49), 118

Meiggs and Lewis 1988 (no. 49, lines  
 8–9, 20–6), 214; (no. 55, lines  
 10–11), 202; (no. 79, lines 68–9),  
 171

*SEG* (26.72.49–55), 101;  
 (12.100.67–71), 111n39  
*SIG*<sup>3</sup> (141), 214

## Papyri

*P. Cairo Zen.* (59269), 137  
*P. Teb.* (110), 138n2  
*P. Lond.* II (68), 138n2; (334), 138n2  
*P. Mich.* V (355), 138n2

*Select Papyri* I (68), 138n2



# GENERAL INDEX

Compiled by Helen Forbes

- accounting and bookkeeping 83–4  
Acanthus 48–9  
Aegina 37, 46  
agora, Athens 74–5, 78  
*agoranomoi* 73  
agriculture 32–3, 67, 69, 116, 140, 151,  
163, 169, 172, 186–8, 197, 210,  
212–13, 216–17; *see also* farmers  
alliance 57, 60–1, 63, 130  
Althusser, L. 15  
American South 156, 175–84  
ancient economy: *see* economy: ancient;  
ancient, historiography of  
*andreaia*: *see* masculinity  
anthropology 3, 74, 130; social xv  
arbitration 136–8  
archaeology 4, 23, 31, 186–9  
archaeological survey 187–8, 190–6,  
198, 212–13  
Aristotle 14, 20, 28, 33, 35–40, 54,  
106, 141–5, 148–51, 153–4, 157,  
175, 211  
Arkadia 36  
army 107  
Arpinum 118, 119  
assets 81–3, 104–5  
Athens 28–9, 31–3, 35–42, 46, 53–7,  
61, 63, 73–6, 79–80, 83–5, 100–7,  
127, 131–3, 135, 137, 144, 146,  
152, 157, 159–64, 167–72, 182,  
200, 209, 212, 214–16, 218  
Attic Stelae 213, 214–15  
Attica 31, 33, 35–6, 40, 68, 73, 79,  
102, 163, 169, 203, 211–12,  
214–16  
*autarkeia* 101  
bankers 69, 105–6, 117, 124, 127, 129,  
164  
banking 69, 83–4, 105–6, 114, 164; *see*  
*also* money-lending  
*blabe* 135  
Boeckh, A. 13–14  
booty 214  
Bouselidai 200–8  
bronze 48, 56  
business 83, 106–7, 131–2, 135  
Byzantium 133  
  
capital 21–2, 41, 86  
capitalism 5  
Capua 116  
charcoal 80  
*chremata* 32, 58  
*chrematistike* 14, 101, 157  
Chios, Chians 47, 146, 162  
Cicero 115, 122–8  
cities 116, 119, 132, 146–8  
citizen status 54–5, 57, 62–3, 104, 161,  
172, 176–8  
citizenship 28, 53, 55, 104, 164, 218  
class 16, 28, 37, 61, 180, 213, 217, 219  
cliometric studies 4, 161  
Cnidus: *see* Knidos  
coinage xvii, 16–18, 24, 29, 44–51,  
53–6, 63, 72, 134, 148, 157;  
circulation of 16, 48, 56, 134; *see also*  
*dokimos*, *dokimastes*, money  
colonization 31, 115, 213–14  
Colophon 47  
commerce: *see* trade  
consumption 115, 151  
contract 130–7

- Corinth 32, 46, 78, 215  
 Cozzo, A. 14, 17, 20  
 Crane, R. 11–12  
 credit 67, 107, 123, 134–7; *see also* debt  
 Cylon: *see* Kylon  
 Cyprus 57, 58, 59, 77, 209  
  
 debt 28, 32, 57, 106–7, 115, 123–5,  
     135, 143  
 debt-bondage 35, 143, 162–3  
 democracy 42, 54, 61–3, 148, 161, 164,  
     169, 172, 209, 214, 218–20  
 demographic change 30, 37, 38–9  
 demography xvi, 30–1, 50, 79, 170, 211  
*demos* 56, 152  
*diaita*: *see* arbitration  
 diaspora, Greek: *see* Greek diaspora  
*dike* 131, 135–7  
 Diogenes 77  
 division of labour: *see* labour, division of  
*dokimos*, *dokimastes* 55  
 domination 140–55, 175  
 dowry 57, 153  
 Dracon: *see* Drakon  
 Drakon 37–8  
  
 economic rationality: *see* rationality,  
     economic  
 economics xv, xvi, 9–10, 20–9, 85, 114,  
     119, 129, 157, 169, 218, 220; *see*  
     *also* neoclassical economics  
 economy: agricultural and rural 34,  
     116–19; ancient xv, xvi, 1–3, 33,  
     45–6, 52–3, 64, 67–70, 75, 85,  
     113–15, 118, 121, 124, 127–9,  
     142–3, 145–7, 150–1, 156–8, 160,  
     163, 176, 182, 185, 198, 207,  
     209–10, 217, 219; ancient, histori-  
     ography of 1–3, 5–6, 8, 13–14, 16,  
     18, 119, 121, 158; embedded 26–7;  
     local and regional 48–9, 118, 121;  
     modern 5, 25–6, 52, 73, 84, 157,  
     176, 203; moneyed 44–51, 52, 70,  
     210, 216  
 egalitarianism 17, 170, 210–11, 215,  
     220  
 Egypt 31, 77, 107, 117, 209  
 Eion 47  
  
 Eleusinian Mysteries 49  
 elites 17, 29, 45–7, 50, 54, 56–7, 61–3,  
     78, 100, 114, 117–19, 124–5, 128,  
     135, 144, 158, 160–3, 168, 170–1,  
     176–82, 209, 211, 214, 216, 218; *see*  
     *also oligoi*  
 employment 100–3, 175–6; *see also*  
     labour; slave labour  
 Ephesos 107  
 equality 182, 218  
 Euagoras of Salamis 56, 57  
 Euboea 213  
 exchange 21–2, 25, 31–3, 45, 50–1, 55,  
     61, 67, 72–3, 76, 85, 115, 117, 120,  
     124, 130, 133, 147–9, 167, 186;  
     monetary 21, 45, 50, 53, 55, 72;  
     value 60, 151, 157, 167  
 exploitation 140–55, 170, 185–99  
 exports 77, 152; *see also* trade  
  
 fairs 113, 119–22, 129  
 family 59–62, 191, 200–5, 219  
 farmers, farming 33–5, 69, 101, 130–2,  
     160, 163, 180, 193, 212; *see also*  
     agriculture  
 feminism 9, 103  
 fines 49, 147  
 Finley, M.I. xviii, 10, 25, 27–30, 32,  
     41, 72–3, 78, 86n6, 86n10, 100,  
     167, 216; *Ancient Economy* xviii, 25,  
     27, 78, 86n6, 100, 158–9, 175  
 food production: *see* production, food  
 formalist–substantivist debate 5, 8, 167,  
     176, 219  
 Foucault, M. 15, 103  
 Fregellae 118  
 friendship 60, 132  
  
 gain xviii, 8–43, 86; *see also kerdos*  
 game theory 25, 206  
 Geertz, C. 17–18  
 gender 5, 101  
 gifts 59–61, 123, 133, 160  
 gold xvii, 54, 56, 61, 64, 149  
 gossip 63  
 grain 75  
 graves 203  
 Greek diaspora 31

- Grote, G. 14
- hektemoros/oi* 34–8, 40
- helots 143–4, 185–99, 217; *see also* Sparta
- Herodotus 32
- Hesiod 20, 32, 153, 212
- honour (*timē*) 17, 57, 62, 85, 124, 151
- horoi 69, 81
- household 67–99 *passim*, 68, 71–2, 80, 82–4, 98, 100–2, 104–6, 140–2, 154, 157, 168–9, 170, 172, 203; *see also* family
- humanism and humanities 8–16, 19, 23; *see also* liberal humanism; new humanism
- imports 31, 77–9, 87n17, 145–7, 152; *see also* trade
- Industrial Revolution 27
- inheritance 211–13
- inscriptions 49, 117
- interest 60
- kerdos* xviii, 8–10, 14, 17–18, 23, 25, 28, 32, 36, 41–2, 76, 84, 130, 136–7, 167, 200, 207
- kinship 132, 202; *see also* family
- Kleisthenes 73
- Knidos 57
- Kolaios of Samos 32
- Konon 57
- Kurke, L. 17–18, 50, 54–5, 114
- Kylon 37
- labour 25, 29–30, 32–34, 36–9, 68–71, 100–2, 117, 140, 144–5, 150, 151, 154, 159–60, 162–4, 168–9, 175–84, 189, 214, 216–17; division of 68, 145; wage, specialization of 67–99; *see also* debt-bondage; helots; peasant societies; slave labour; slavery; tenant farmers
- Laconia 185, 189
- land 29–30, 33–4, 38–9, 54, 56, 59, 63, 106, 115, 117, 119, 143, 151, 162, 167, 169–70, 189–90, 200, 206–7, 209–20
- landscape 188, 190
- landlords 37
- Laurion 53, 80, 161
- law 45, 72, 132–3; legal regulation 73, 106, 123, 131, 136, 212; *see also* *nomos/oi*
- law court 41, 54, 107; speeches 52–66; *see also* legal activities; rhetoric
- legal activities 49, 53, 83, 106, 130–2, 134–7, 205, 217; *see also* law; law court; *nomos/oi*; rhetoric
- liberal humanism 9–15, 23; *see also* humanism and humanities
- Libya 149
- liturgies 147–8, 161, 219
- loans, monetary 49, 53, 58–60, 64, 113–15, 122–8, 133–4, 137, 151–2, 207
- Luhrmann, N. 52
- Lykourgos, of Sparta 40
- Malthus, T.R. 30
- manufacture: *see* crafts; workshop
- manumission 172
- marketplace 67–99 *passim*, 74–5, 76, 77
- markets 24–5, 35, 85; periodic (*nundinae*) 113, 115–19, 122, 129
- marriage 45, 57, 62–3, 105, 127, 130, 132, 153, 167, 200–4
- Marx, K. 26, 68, 140, 157
- Marxism 9, 10, 14–16, 19, 22, 157
- Massalia 47
- masculinity 100–12
- Mauss, M. 130
- McCloskey, Deirdre (Donald) 13, 22
- Megara 37–8
- Melos 186
- merchants 50, 117, 119
- Messenia 36, 185–99
- metallurgy 80
- metals: *see* gold; silver
- Metapontum 213–14
- metics 70, 76, 148, 160
- Meyer, E. 14
- middling ideologies 38; groups 50, 54, 170–1
- Miletus 47

- mining 32, 70, 105, 144, 164, 170,  
     171–2, 188  
 Minturnae 118  
*misthos* (rent, wages) 14, 101; *see also*  
     rent; wages  
 modernist–primitivist debate: *see*  
     primitivist–modernist debate  
 money 17–18, 25, 44–51, 52–66, 83,  
     134, 151, 206–7; circulation of  
     134–5; public 54, 79–80, 128, 147,  
     164; symbolism of 53; *see also*  
     coinage; loans, monetary  
 money-lenders (*faeneratores*) 124, 126–7,  
     129  
  
 Near East 3, 31, 47, 61, 209  
 neoclassical economics 20, 23–4, 29–30  
 new historicists 16–18  
 new humanism 9–16; *see also* humanism  
     and humanities  
 New Economic Sociology: *see* sociology,  
     economic  
 New Institutional Economics 29–31,  
     41–2  
 Nietzsche, F. 15  
*nomisma* 53–5  
*nomos/oi* 53–5; *see also* law  
*nundinae*: *see* markets, periodic  
  
 occupation 67–99, 100  
*oikos*: *see* household  
*oligoi* 35–6; *see also* elites  
 olives 207  
  
 Pasion 103, 106  
 peasant societies 74, 78, 116–19,  
     132–3, 152, 170  
 peasants 28, 116, 118, 152, 160  
 Peisistratos 40, 73  
*pelates/ai* 35, 40; *see also* *penestes/ai*  
*penestes/ai* 63, 143, 217; *see also*  
     *pelates/ai*  
 Pericles 77  
 Persia, Persians 57, 58, 60, 149  
 phenomenology 9  
 Phormion 103  
*phialê* 58–61  
*philotimos* 57–8, 61, 63  
  
 Pindar 14, 61  
 piracy 32, 145  
 Piraeus 75  
*pistis* 133–4, 136–7  
 Plato 54, 71–4, 77, 80, 86n6, 106, 133,  
     211  
 Polanyi, K. 20, 26–7, 158  
 polis 44–5, 53–4, 67, 71–3, 85–6, 104,  
     209–20  
 politics 16, 53–4, 57, 85–6, 114,  
     125–6, 154, 172, 198, 210, 220;  
     sexuality and 5  
 Pompeii 118  
 population: *see* demography;  
     demographic change  
 positivism 22–3  
 poverty 215  
 prestation: *see* reciprocity  
 price 49, 75–7, 80, 107, 118, 122–3,  
     137, 161  
 primitivist–modernist debate 1, 5, 121,  
     167  
 production 32–3, 46–8, 67–99, 115,  
     117–19, 150, 152, 154, 163, 210;  
     food 67  
 profit xviii, 20–2, 30, 32–3, 38, 76,  
     101, 125, 134–5, 137, 148, 150,  
     156–7, 160, 168  
 property 40, 56–9, 61–2, 81, 104–5,  
     118, 124, 126, 131, 141, 143–5,  
     147, 200, 205, 214, 216–17;  
     monetary 53, 56–7, 59, 63, 212; of  
     Demosthenes 81–2; *timêma*  
     ('rateable') 63; *see also* land  
 prostitutes 69, 132, 137, 160  
 Protagoras 73  
 Puteoli 117  
  
 quantitative analysis xvi, 4, 159, 161  
  
 race 76  
 rationality, economic 160  
 reciprocity 26, 28, 67, 130–1, 133–4,  
     137, 150  
 religion 72  
 religious activities 49, 121–2, 129,  
     198  
 Renaissance 11

- rent 131, 143, 152, 216–17; *see also*  
*misthos*  
resources 20, 67, 186, 209–20  
rhetoric 52–66, 113, 218  
Roman: empire 4; Italy, 47, 113–30,  
122–8, 158, 181, 215; Magna  
Graecia 4; villa 72  
Rome 28, 118, 209
- Sahlins, M. 20  
Sartre, J.P. 15  
science xv, 11, 12  
*seisachtheia* 40, 73  
settlement patterns 190–8  
serfs: *see* helots  
sharecroppers 35, 190, 197  
ships, shipping 32, 69–70, 132, 163  
silver xvii, 45–6, 49, 53–6, 80, 105  
slave labour 34, 38–41, 70–2, 78, 80–3,  
100–3, 105–6, 117, 146–9, 151,  
154, 157, 159–60, 164, 168–71,  
175–84, 217; *see also* debt-bondage;  
labour; slavery  
slave society 146, 162, 176, 179, 182  
slavery 28–9, 32, 39, 100–1, 105–6,  
140–6, 151, 153–4, 156–66,  
167–74, 175–84; *see also*  
manumission  
Smith, Adam 14, 21, 157  
social sciences 8–10, 14, 19–20, 25  
socialism 5  
sociology, economic 4, 25–9, 114–15  
Solon 20, 29, 31, 33, 36, 39–42, 54–5,  
73, 143, 146, 162, 170  
SOS amphora 31  
Sostratos of Aegina 32  
South Africa 178  
Southern Argolid 213  
Sparta 36, 40, 143–4, 146, 152–4, 159,  
185–6, 189–96, 212; *see also* helots  
specialization: of labour 67–99; of  
technology and crafts 80–1, 86n6,  
105
- state, the 31, 40, 115, 218  
statistics 4, 159  
status 27–8, 76, 167, 202; *see also*  
citizen status  
substantivism 27–8  
substantivist–formalist debate: *see*  
formalist–substantivist debate  
Sulla 123–4  
supply and demand 20, 21, 39, 76  
Syracuse 47
- taxation 49, 73, 79, 103, 115, 125,  
147–8, 152, 188, 219  
technology 80–1  
tenant farmers 36–7; *see also* farmers  
tenants 131  
Thessaly 143, 146; *see also* *penestes/ai*  
*thetes* 46, 171  
Tiv 167  
trade 31–2, 50, 77–80, 102–3, 133,  
148, 152, 158, 167; *see also* exchange  
transaction 148–50; *see also* contract;  
exchange  
tribute 49, 152, 186, 188
- wages 35, 68, 101, 144; *see also* *misthos*  
war 54, 56, 58, 72, 76, 78–9, 107, 142,  
145–7, 161, 171, 192  
wealth 21, 38, 41, 53–6, 61–3, 101,  
104, 107, 130, 140, 145, 148,  
162–4, 175, 209, 214–18; attitudes  
to wealth, 54, 101, 144, 147, 162,  
163–4; individual 20–1, 54, 86,  
151, 214–15; *see also* consumption;  
land; poverty  
Weber, M. 26–8, 71, 216  
Will, E. 53, 132  
wine 215  
women 102–5, 152–4  
workshop 67–99
- Xenophon 148, 153, 157, 160,  
163–4